Venus Versus Virus 5

Seven Seas

It's Time to Die!

As mistrust and unease form within Sonoka's ranks, the evil mistress decides to grant her minions Guy and Ruka just what they desire most—the power to obliterate Lucia and Sumire once and for all! Is this the ultimate showdown or a sign of much darker things to come? Find out in the fifth pulse-pounding installment of *Venus Versus Virus!*

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MANGA

Seven Seas

Illustrated by Atsushi Suzumi

Venus Versus Virus

ヴィーナス ヴァーサス ヴァイアラス

VOLUME 5

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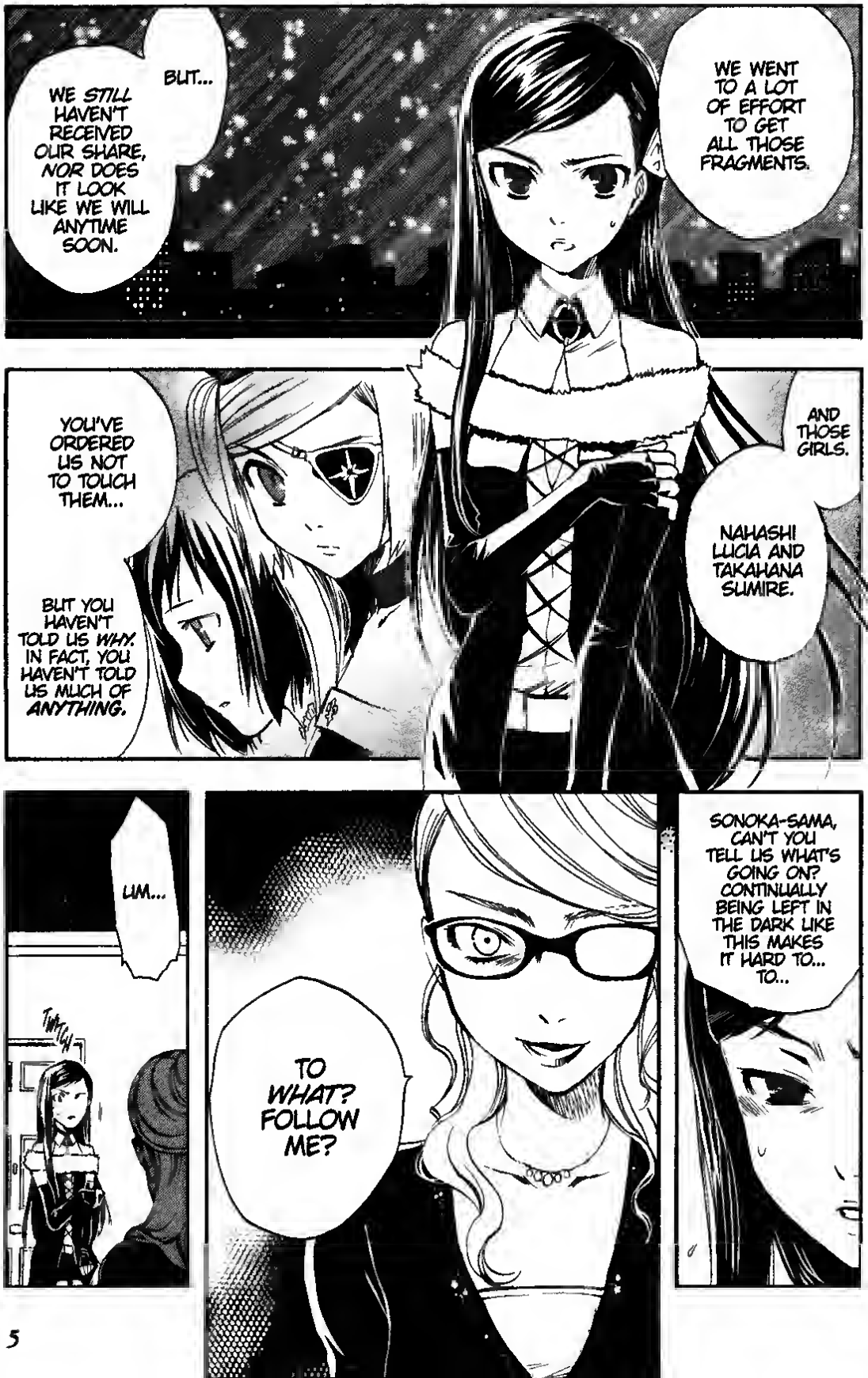
.....
WHAT IS IT, RUKA?
KBLE
HAVE SOMETHING TO ASK?

Piece 19
MEETINGS.
CONTROL.


WE WENT TO A LOT OF EFFORT TO GET ALL THOSE FRAGMENTS.
BUT...
WE STILL HAVEN'T RECEIVED OUR SHARE, NOR DOES IT LOOK LIKE WE WILL ANYTIME SOON.
AND THOSE GIRLS.
NAHASHI LUCIA AND TAKAHANA SUMIRE.
YOU'VE ORDERED US NOT TO TOUCH THEM...
BUT YOU HAVEN'T TOLD US WHY. IN FACT, YOU HAVEN'T TOLD US MUCH OF ANYTHING.
SONOKA-SAMA, CAN'T YOU TELL US WHAT'S GOING ON? CONTINUALLY BEING LEFT IN THE DARK LIKE THIS MAKES IT HARD TO... TO...
TO WHAT? FOLLOW ME?
UM...
TWITCH

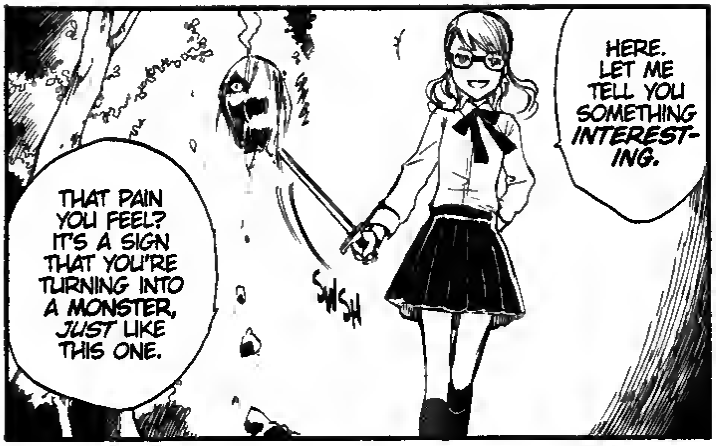
TSK, TSK.
WHEN DID YOU START THINKING YOU COULD SPEAK TO ME AS AN EQUAL?
!
IF IT WEREN'T FOR ME, YOU WOULDN'T BE WORRIED ABOUT GETTING FRAGMENTS RIGHT NOW...
AS YOUR OWN WOULD HAVE BEEN STOLEN LONG AGO.
OR HAVE YOU FORGOTTEN? HMM?

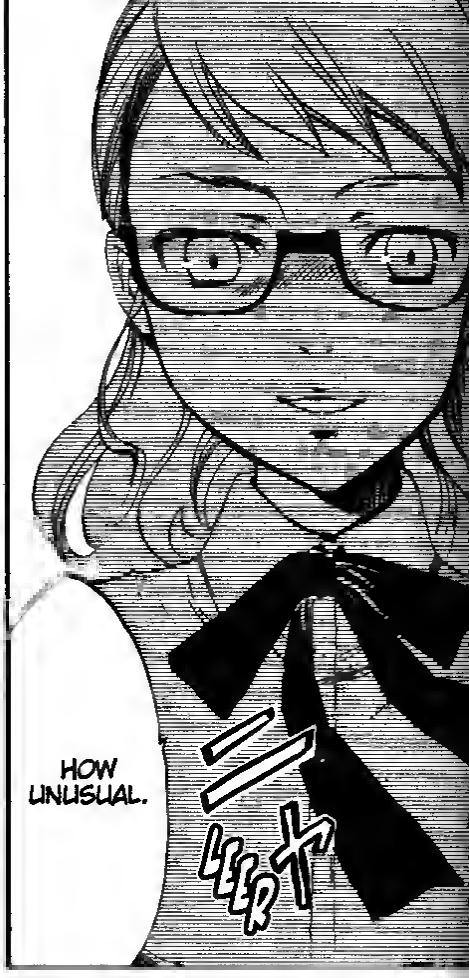
.....
I... HAVEN'T FORGOTTEN, SONOKA-SAMA.
SQUEEZ
TELL ME, DEAR, WHO WAS IT THAT SAVED YOU FROM BECOMING A VIRUS?
I WILL NEVER FORGET THE DEBT I OWE YOU FOR SAVING MY LIFE.
THAT DAY...
MY LIFE...
MY WHOLE WORLD...
WAS WARPED...

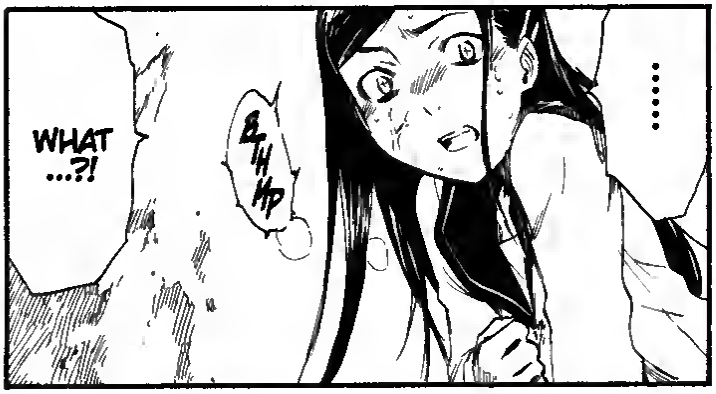
NO...
AHHH!
STAY AWAY FROM ME!!
WHAT IS THAT FREAK?!
HF
WHAT DOES IT WANT FROM ME?!
AH ...!
WHAP
WHUMP
UFF!!
THUK
CLARE

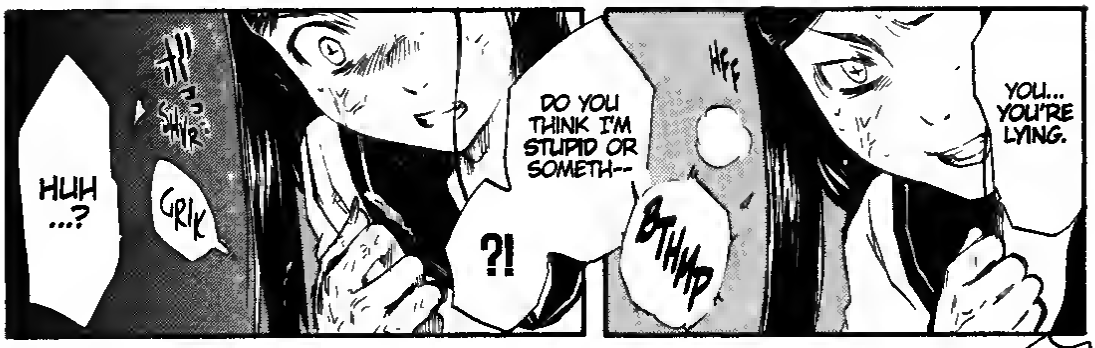
SHLAK
UHN ...?
AH ...!!
BTHMP
ZLP
WHAT THE...?!
MY... MY BODY...!
AHHH ...
BTHMP
GRK
IT FEELS LIKE...
BTHMP
LIKE ALL MY VEINS ARE WRITHING!
AAH. AAAGH!!

WELL DONE.
ZWSH
A WIND FRAGMENT... EXCELLENT.
OH MY...
YOU STILL HAVE YOUR HUMAN CONSCIOUS-NESS?
NGH...
WH-WHO ...?
BTHMP
HCF
HCF
.....?!


HERE. LET ME TELL YOU SOMETHING INTERESTING.
SWISH
THAT PAIN YOU FEEL? IT'S A SIGN THAT YOU'RE TURNING INTO A MONSTER, JUST LIKE THIS ONE.


HOW UNUSUAL.
ニヤリ


WHAT ...?!
BLHHP
.....


HUH ...?
GRIK
DO YOU THINK I'M STUPID OR SOMETH--
?!
BTHHP
YOU... YOU'RE LYING.

HEE HEE
WOULD YOU LIKE ME TO SAVE YOU?
OH MY GOD, MY HAND!! WHAT'S HAPPENING TO ME?!
.....
PSHHHH
BTHHP
BTHHP
AHHHHH-HHHH!!

BA
HURR... RGH!
THU MP
TH-THEN DO IT!
HURRY UP AND SAVE ME!!
YOU CAN S-SAVE ME...?!
HOWEVER, IF THIS DOES WORK...
YES... I CAN SAVE YOU.
IF I TAKE THIS LITTLE FRAGMENT AND REPLACE IT INSIDE YOU...
THEN THE TRANSFORMATION MIGHT STOP.
HEE HEE HEE
P-PLEASE...
BTHMP
GRAA AAAA AAH!!
NGH... GI...
WELL? DO WE HAVE A DEAL?
S-SOUL...
NGR...
THEN, IN EXCHANGE, I'D LIKE FOR YOU TO HELP US.
BTHMP

GIVE IT TO ME!!!
FWISH
あ、あ
NOW, NOW. ANSWER PROPERLY.
AGH...
THK
?!
EXCEL-LENT.
SMILE
STMP
I'LL DO.. ANYTHING. ANYTHING! I SWEAR!!
P-PLEASE...
HUH...?!
KOFF

KIII
WE HAVE A DEAL.
SHWIP
UNH...
AAAA AHHH
KIT
AAGH !!
HHH HHH!
SWIPP
UKH ...
F?

THE ENSOULING PROCEDURE WAS...
NOW, LET'S SEE...
TWITCH
A SUCCESS. PERFECT.
.....
NH...
YOU SHALL BE CALLED RUKA.
I'M GOING TO GIVE YOU A NEW NAME, ONE BEFITTING OF THE NEW SOUL WITHIN YOU.
FROM THIS DAY FORWARD ...
LOOK AT ME, DEAR.
SHK

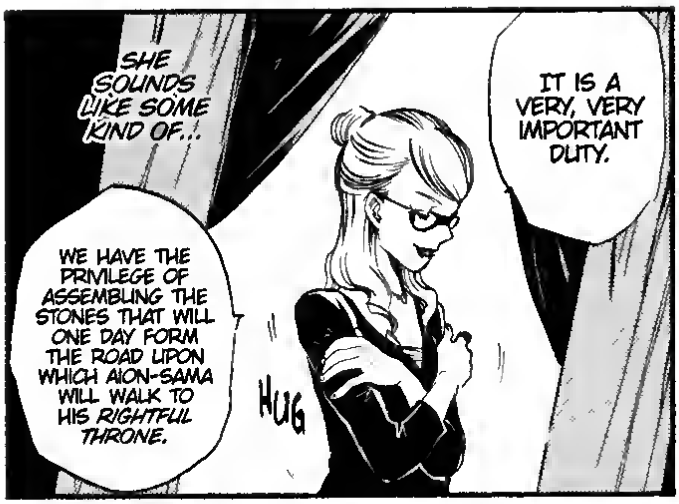
I AM SONOKA, FAITHFUL FOLLOWER OF THE TRUE GOD, AION-SAMA.
AND AS OF THIS MOMENT YOU HAVE BEEN REBORN AS MY SERVANT. DO YOU UNDERSTAND?
"RUKA"?
NO, I'M...
I'M...?
THAT DAY...

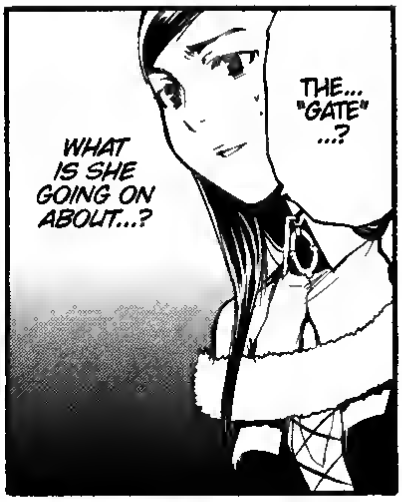
I WAS REBORN IN BOTH BODY AND SOUL THANKS TO YOU, SONOKA-SAMA.
I DESIRE NOTHING MORE THAN TO USE THEM IN YOUR SERVICE.
S.
We
THAT'S WHY I WOULD LIKE TO KNOW...
TO KNOW WHAT IT IS YOU STRIVE FOR...
THAT WILL ALLOW ME TO SERVE YOU TO MY VERY UTMOST.

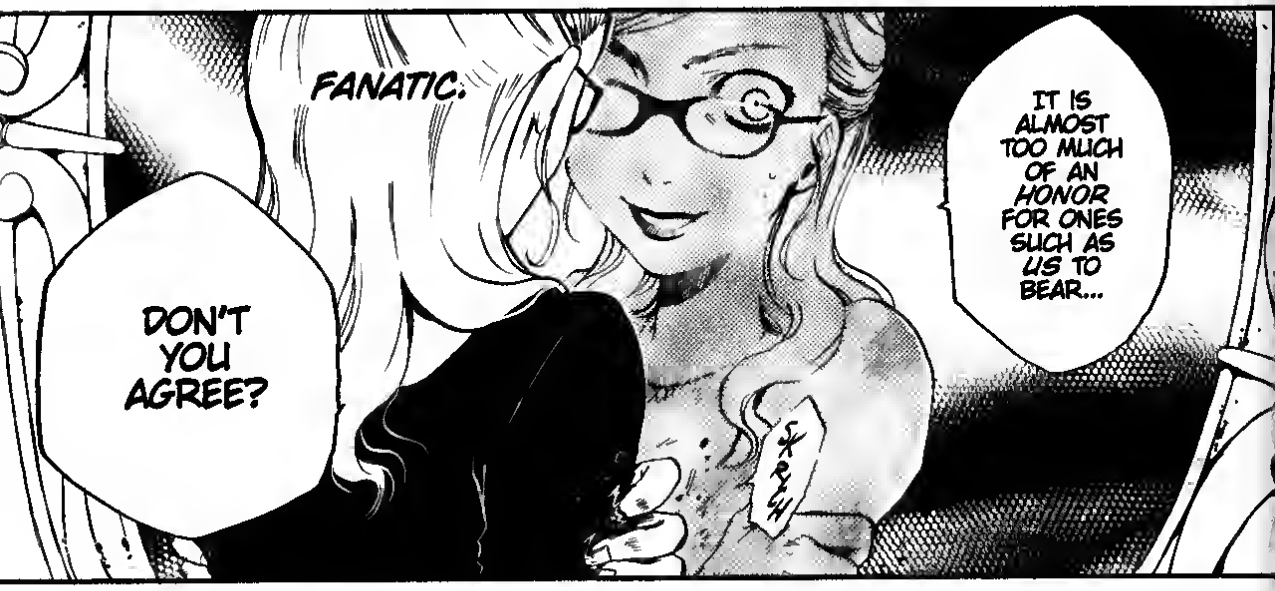
I WAS THE SAME ONCE, YOU SEE.
LEARNING MY GLORIOUS MASTER'S ULTIMATE PLAN WAS THE GREATEST HAPPINESS I HAVE EVER KNOWN.
THAT, I CAN UNDERSTAND.
SWP
HNH...
THIS WORLD WE KNOW, THE FALSE WORLD, MUST BE BROKEN...
SO THAT HE CAN BRING FORTH THAT UTOPIA.
WHAT AION-SAMA SEEKS IS THE "TRUE WORLD."
SO THEN...
SWIP
HAPPILY AND WITHOUT ANY DOUBTS.
FOR THAT PURPOSE, I WILL GIVE AION-SAMA MY EVERY-THING...

.....
AHH... "FRAGMENTS."
GATHERING THE FRAGMENTS IS ALL PART OF FINDING THIS...
AH, OUR UTOPIA...?
SHIR
YES. THEY MOST CERTAINLY ARE.
THEY ARE PIECES OF THE TRUE WORLD, AFTER ALL.
THE FRAGMENTS ...
ARE BITS OF A WORLD?
YES. FROM THE DAY OF THE MISTAKEN CREATION, THEY HAVE BEEN HIDDEN WITHIN THE SOULS OF HUMANS AND PASSED FROM GENERATION TO GENERATION.
THESE SOURCES OF UNTOLD POWER ARE, UNFORTUNATELY, BEING LOST TO THE RAVAGES OF TIME.

LOW-LEVEL VIRUSES SEE FRAGMENTS AS NOTHING MORE THAN AN ENERGY SOURCE. SO THEY SEEK THEM OUT, ABSORB THEM...
AND SIPHON OUT ALL THE POWER UNTIL THE FRAGMENT *ITSELF* IS DESTROYED.
IF THINGS CONTINUE AS THEY ARE, THERE IS A DISTINCT POSSIBILITY THAT THE "*BUILDING BLOCKS*" FOR THE TRUE WORLD MAY SOMEDAY DISAPPEAR *ENTIRELY*.
BUT AION-SAMA, THE MASTER OF THE TRUE WORLD, LEARNED OF THAT DANGER.
HE HAS CHOSEN US AS HIS ELITE, AND GIVEN US THE SACRED DUTY...
OF GATHERING AS MANY FRAGMENTS AS WE POSSIBLY CAN ON THE NIGHTS WHEN THEY CRYSTALLIZE, NIGHTS WHEN THE *STARS* FALL.
WITH THEM, WE CAN FULFILL OUR ULTIMATE *DUTY*--OPENING THE "*GATE*" TO THE TRUE WORLD.


SHE SOUNDS LIKE SOME KIND OF...
IT IS A VERY, VERY IMPORTANT DUTY.
WE HAVE THE PRIVILEGE OF ASSEMBLING THE STONES THAT WILL ONE DAY FORM THE ROAD UPON WHICH AION-SAMA WILL WALK TO HIS RIGHTFUL THRONE.
HUG


THE... "GATE" ...?
WHAT IS SHE GOING ON ABOUT...?


FANATIC.
IT IS ALMOST TOO MUCH OF AN HONOR FOR ONES SUCH AS US TO BEAR...
DON'T YOU AGREE?
SKRSH

HOW-EVER...

WAY TOO MUCH OF AN HONOR!
O-OF COURSE, SONOKA-SAMA!
SHIT

I WAS INTENDING TO TAKE CARE OF MYSELF.
THOSE TWO...
I ONLY AWAITED HIS PERMISSION.
I STILL CANNOT SEE WHERE THOSE TWO GIRLS FIT INTO THIS. WHY ARE WE NOT ALLOWED TO ERASE THEM?
IS IT BECAUSE THEY'RE VIRUS HUNTERS?
YOU ALLOW THEM TO LIVE BECAUSE THEY CLEAN UP ALL THE LOW-LEVEL VIRUSES THAT MIGHT GET IN OUR WAY?
OF COURSE, THIS WAS BACK WHEN I ASSUMED THEY WERE NOTHING MORE THAN SIMPLE PREY.
BUT AION-SAMA HAS FOUND SOMETHING DIFFERENT IN THOSE TWO.
THE STRANGE "POWERS" THAT THOSE TWO BOAST...
HAVE VERY SPECIAL USES.

I DIDN'T HAVE THE CHANCE TO INQUIRE ABOUT HIS REASONING.
HOWEVER, IT IS OBVIOUS THAT A SIMPLE HUNT WILL NOT NET US EITHER OF THOSE TWO.
"SPECIAL USES"...?
THEN ISN'T IT EVEN MORE IMPERATIVE THEY BE REMOVED BEFORE THEY CAN HARM YOUR... ER, *OUR* GOALS?
TWITCH
!
AION-SAMA IS STILL ACCLIMATING HIMSELF TO HIS NEW BODY.
I WOULD ASSUME THAT ONCE HE HAS REGAINED FULL USE OF HIS GREAT POWERS...
HE WILL DEAL WITH THOSE TWO GIRLS *PERSONALLY*.
SO YOU'RE SAYING...
THAT THEY'RE TOO MUCH FOR *US* TO HANDLE...?
.....
YOU REALLY THINK *YOU* COULD HANDLE THEM?

A PIDDLING LITTLE "CONTAINER" LIKE YOU?
!!
YOU AREN'T HUMAN, ARE YOU?
NOT ANYMORE.
WELL, HUMANS DO TEND TO GET MAD WHEN A PAINFUL TRUTH IS POINTED OUT TO THEM.
OH, WAIT.
HEE HEE
OH DEAR. DID I TOUCH A NERVE?
I'M...
I'M A WHAT...?!
YOU'RE NOTHING MORE THAN A POOR LITTLE DOLL...
THAT CAN'T SURVIVE WITHOUT HAVING OTHERS' SOULS IMPLANTED WITHIN YOU.

YOU THINK I'M SOME PUPPET HAVING MY STRINGS PULLED BY THOSE... THOSE ROCKS?!
WRONG! I'M THE ONE USING THEM!
IF I JUST HAD MORE...
TWO OR THREE MORE ...
WSH
THEN I COULD KILL THOSE TWO GIRLS WITHOUT EVEN TRYING!!
SHH
KWIP

?!
SHWIP
NYUUUWIP
紅の檻
ルージュ ケージ
ROUGE CAGE.
TINK
HUH ...?
NK... !!
SUCH A NAUGHTY CHILD.
TOK
TOK

WAVE
WAVE
DO YOU REALLY WANT THIS THAT BADLY? HMM?
AHH...
HFF
SH VR
HFF
FRA... FRAGMENT...!!
MY, MY. SO IMPATIENT.
SHF
WELL, SINCE THE SOUL ALREADY IMPLANTED WITHIN YOU LOOKS A TOUCH SHAKY...
I GUESS I COULD LOAN YOU ONE FRAGMENT. JUST ONE, MIND YOU.
DO REMEMBER TO GIVE IT BACK LATER, OKAY?

……!
NH...!
AHH!
AHH...
AAAH...
FAAAASH
FWISH...
I JUST INCREASED YOUR WIND FRAGMENT BY ONE.

NHA...!
施錠 クローズ CLOSE.
FP
VISH
BUT KEEP IN MIND...
YOU MAY BE QUITE SORE FOR A BIT.
HAAH...
HAAH...
SLUMP
AHH...
ZING
.....?!
THERE. NOW YOU HAVE MORE POWER, JUST LIKE YOU WANTED.
HEE
HEE
GO TEST YOUR LIMITS TO YOUR HEART'S CONTENT.

HEY! WATCH WHERE YOU'RE GOIN', RUKA!
SWK
HUH?
BMP
KCHK
TOTTA
?
HAAH
HAAH
RUKA...?
SHVR
AH!
GLIY.
YEESH. WHAT GOT INTO HER?
.....?
TTTT
BTAM

I GUESS I SHOULD GIVE YOU ANOTHER PIECE OF FIRE, SHOULDN'T I...?
WELL, THEN...
OH, THAT'S WONDERFUL TO HEAR.
HOW ARE YOU FEELING? HAVE YOUR INJURIES HEALED NICELY?
HN? UH, YEAH. MOSTLY.
RSH
AAAAGH!
NOW, IT'S JUST A BOX...
FSHH...
A CON-TAINER...
EMPTY...
SHFL

BOOF
TRASH.
FLIT
AHH...
HAHH
HAHH

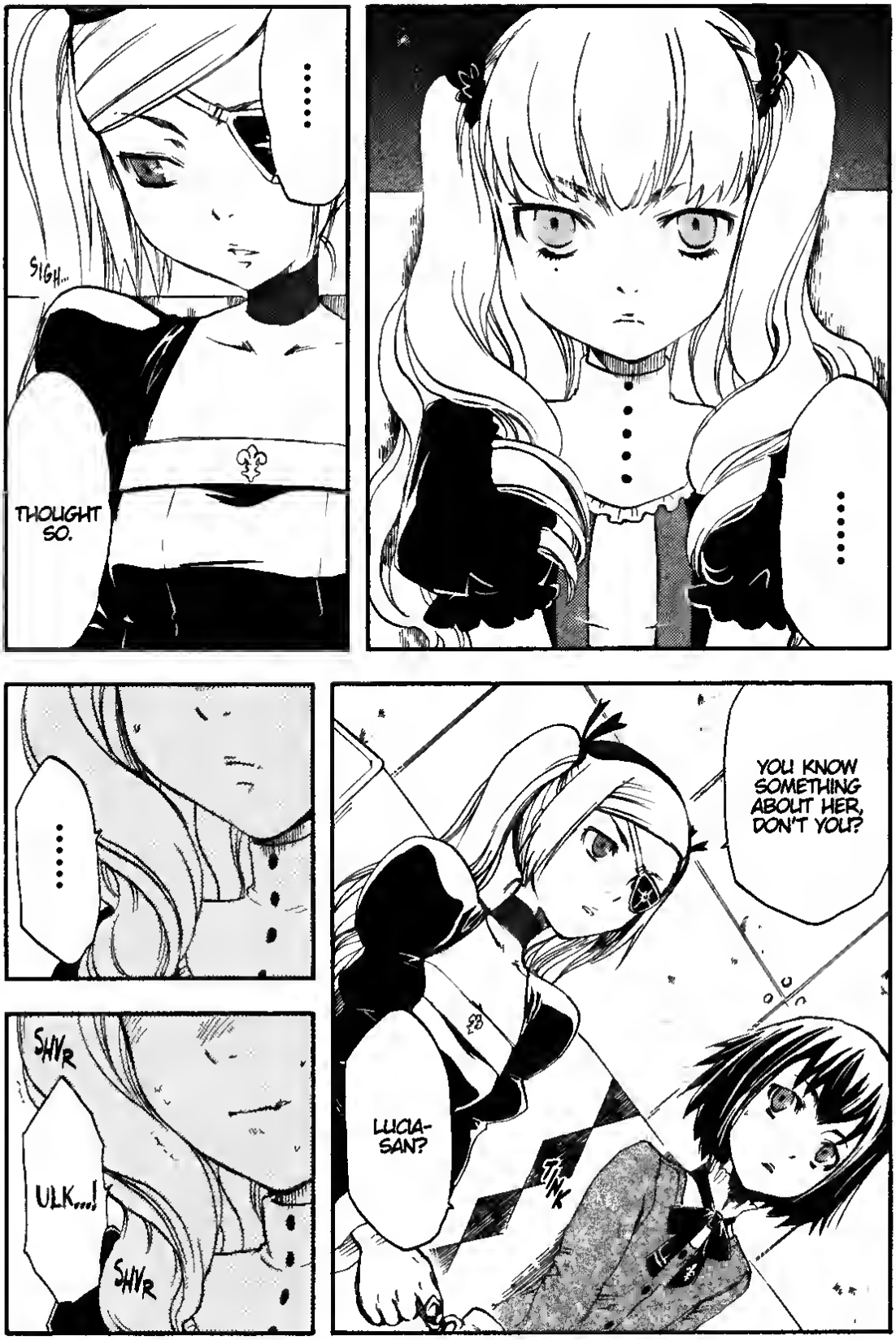
THE...
THE POWER ...
AH...
FWOO
RAAA AAHHH HHHH!!
OOOSH
KRAK
KRAK
KRAK
KRAK

GUK
WHEW...
HMM...
ACCURACY NEEDS WORK...
WH-
CHAK
GUK
NEXT ONE IS... AHA!

HN?
BRAT-
AT-
AT-
AT
YEAH! THAT'S WHAT I'M TALKIN' ABOUT!!
HRM...
!
TWITCH
CRUMBLE
RATE OF FIRE'S A TEEEEENSY BIT TOO FAST...
NNN_
HEAT FROM FRICTION COULD WIND UP MESSING WITH THE VACCINE...
WHAT A LOVELY SCENT...
GUGAH
OOOH!
.....

HEH HEH...
I KNOW THAT SCENT...
!
CHK
LOLA-CHAN! WOULD YOU LIKE TO JOIN US FOR SNACKS?
IT'S GOTTA BE! MY NOSE NEVER LIES!!
DOOOOH
CHOCO-LATE LAVA CAKE!!
.....
YOU KNOW...
TINK
SHE'S RIGHT!

.....
ANOTHER PERSON HERE REALLY SHAKES THINGS UP! ISN'T IT GREAT?
HEE HEE HEE
MNCH
MNCH
IS IT JUST ME, OR HAS THAT GIRL MADE HERSELF DISGUSTINGLY AT HOME HERE ALREADY?
MNCH MNCH
I'M JEALOUS.
MUTTER
.....
"LAYLA."
FREEZE


SIGH...
THOUGHT SO.
YOU KNOW SOMETHING ABOUT HER, DON'T YOU?
LUCIA-SAN?
TINK
SHVR
ULK...!
SHVR

OH MY GOSH!
LOLA-CHAN!
NNNN NNNN NPH.....!!

.....
YOU OKAY?
GLUG GLUG

HERE!
DRINK SOME TEA! QUICK!!
WHAT'S WRONG?! DID SOME CAKE GET STUCK IN YOUR THROAT?!

URK.
BTLMP
DISTRAC-TIONS AREN'T GOING TO WORK.

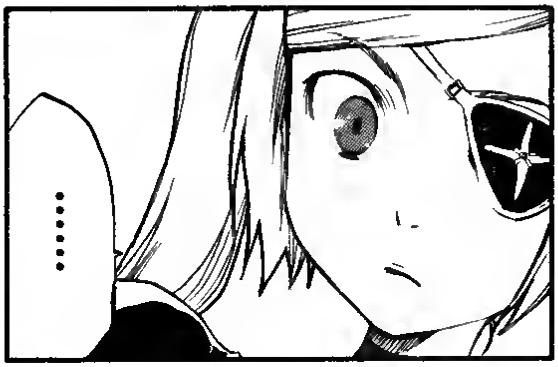
LOLA.
KUFF
WHEW
GOD, I THOUGHT I WAS GOING TO DIE FOR A SECOND THERE!

THAT "LAYLA" GIRL...
YOU'RE CONNECTED TO HER.
TELL ME HOW.
UMM...
.....
I'M SORRY ...
I CAN'T TELL YOU.

I'LL BE ABLE TO SAY IT SOMETIME SOON, THOUGH.
AND I WILL TELL YOU THEN, I PROMISE.
NOT RIGHT NOW, ANYWAY.
I CAN'T HEAR THEM.
RIGHT NOW...
KA-TUNK
NOW IT'S BACK TO WORK! ♪
THANKS FOR THE CHOCOLATE! IT WAS REALLY YUMMY! ♥
.....
IS IT REALLY THIS LATE ALREADY?!
OH MY GOSH!
TMP
TMP

DO YOU MIND IF I GO OUT FOR A BIT?
UM... LUCIA-SAN...?
BLUSH

GOD...
SHE'S SO TRANS-PARENT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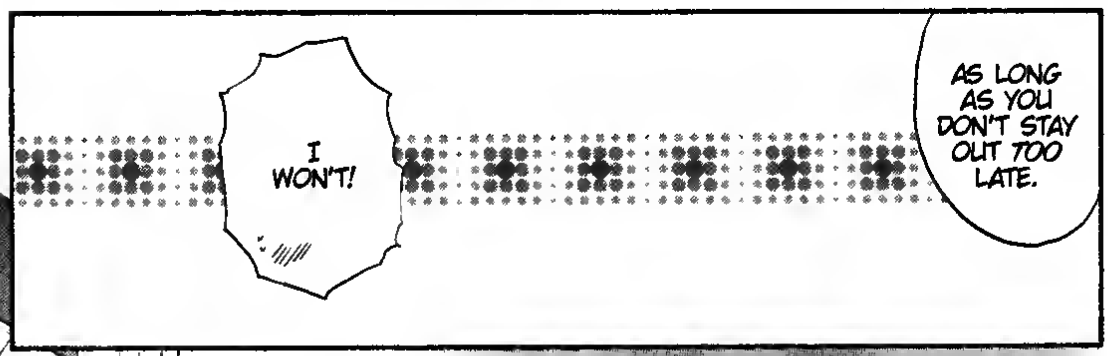

I WON'T!
AS LONG AS YOU DON'T STAY OUT TOO LATE.

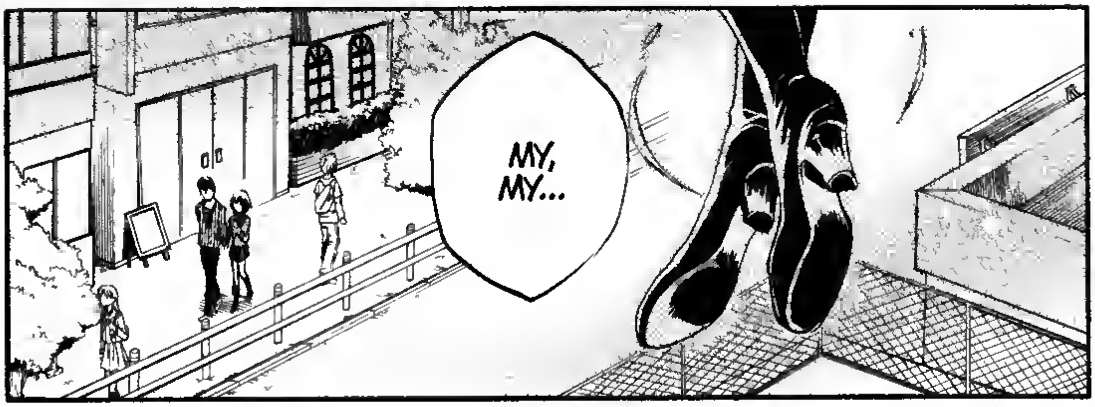
SUMIRE-CHAN.
YOSHIKI-SAN!
OVER HERE.
YOU'RE NOT TOO BUSY TODAY?
HM?
OH... AH, NO. I TOOK TODAY OFF.
SO... SHALL WE GO?

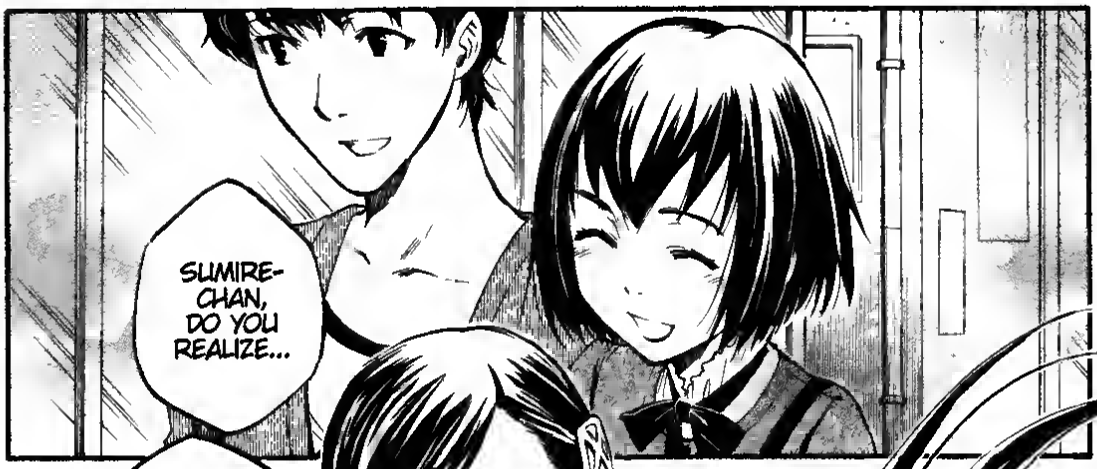
SURE!
!!
FOUND YOU!

FWSH
FSH!!
I'VE BEEN SOOO LOOKING FORWARD TO SEEING YOU, SUMIRE-CHAN!
GRIN

Jewelry
and
Clothes

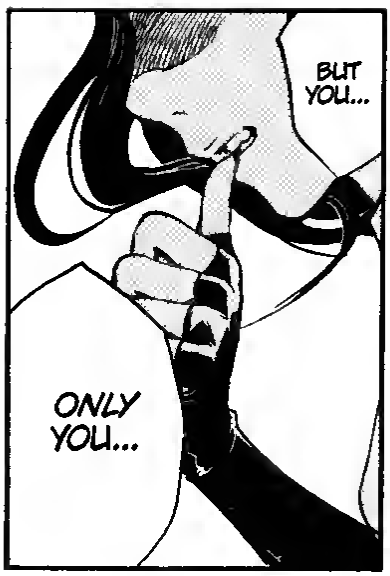
Venus Vangard

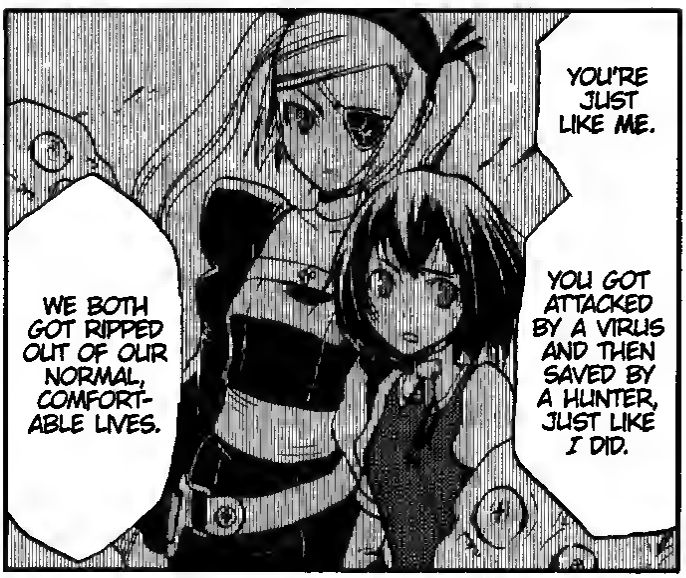




Piece 20
AIMS. HOPES.

THAT REALLY TICKS ME OFF!


BUT YOU...
ONLY YOU...


YOU'RE JUST LIKE ME.
YOU GOT ATTACKED BY A VIRUS AND THEN SAVED BY A HUNTER, JUST LIKE I DID.
WE BOTH GOT RIPPED OUT OF OUR NORMAL, COMFORT-ABLE LIVES.

FRIENDS?
A POTENTIAL LOVER?
YOU STILL SOMEHOW MANAGE TO BE THAT STUPIDLY HAPPY. HOW...?
WELL, MY BRAINLESS LITTLE SUMIRE-CHAN...
IT LOOKS LIKE I'M GOING TO HAVE TO TEACH YOU A LITTLE SOMETHING.
HMPH!
THOSE ARE ALL JUST PATHETIC ILLU-SIONS.
WHAT'S SO GREAT ABOUT BEING SURROUNDED BY CRAP LIKE THAT?

MAKE YOU OPEN YOUR EYES...
TO THE *TRUTH* OF YOUR REALITY.
WOW!
THAT WAS SO MUCH FUN! IT'S BEEN *FOREVER* SINCE I LAST SAW A MOVIE IN A THEATER!
REALLY? THAT'S GREAT.
SO, YOU STILL HAVE SOME TIME, RIGHT?
IS THERE SOMEWHERE ELSE YOU'D LIKE TO GO?
HM?
UM...

AS LONG AS IT'S WITH YOU!
ANYWHERE IS FINE WITH ME...
キラ
I CAN'T SAY THAT!!
WSH
WSH
YEEP!!
SUMIRE-CHAN...?!
DO YOU REALLY HAVE TO THINK THAT HARD?!
PLANETARIUM
I KNOW!
HMM...

OH... WELL, DARN.
SORRY, WE ARE CLOSED TODAY.
PLEASE VISIT US AGAIN SOON.
THEY'RE CLOSED ...
I SHOULD'VE CHECKED THEIR HOURS BEFORE-HAND.
SORRY.

I GUESS WE SHOULD HEAD BACK, THEN.
GLOOM
OH
OKAY...
UH...?!
SHVR...
WSH
KIII
?
SUMIRE-CHAN?
THIS FEELING!
A KEKKAI ?!
AH, AH, AH!
FWSH
?!

YOU CAN'T LEAVE YET, SUMIRE-CHAN!
FWOOSH
RUKA ?!
HEE
YOU CAME HERE TO LOOK AT STARS, RIGHT?
WELL, I'M ABOUT TO MAKE YOU SEE A WHOLE BUNCH OF THEM!

HERE! HOPE YOU ENJOY THE SHOW!!
WHA?!
FWOOO
THAT'S THE MONSTER THAT ATTACKED US AT THE PARK BEFORE!
DON'T WORRY! I CAN HANDLE HER!
YEEP!
THUMP
SORRY WE ARE CLOSED TODAY
ESPECIALLY NOW THAT MY BRACELET'S BEEN FIXED BY LOLA-CHAN!
TK

DANG IT, I DROPPED MY GUARD...!!
I THOUGHT THAT SINCE THEY COULDN'T HUNT UNTIL THE NEXT METEOR SHOWER, WE'D BE LEFT ALONE!
YOSHIKI-SAN, PLEASE RUN!!
THAT'S IT! THAT'S THE SPIRIT!! ♪
REMEMBER, YOU HELD UP AGAINST HER REALLY WELL THE LAST TIME YOU FOUGHT HER!
BUT YOU CAN DO THIS, SUMIRE! YOU CAN!!
TODAY...
CLENCH

HN!
YOU CAN BEAT HER!
FWOOOOO
FINISH
GRIN

WHAP
NGH!!
FWOOOO
WHAT THE HECK WAS THAT...?!
OH DEAR!
SUMIRE-CHAN!!
SKSHH
RRG...!

SOMETHING'S DIFFERENT...
HER "SCENT"... IT'S CHANGED.
IS SOME-THING WRONG, SUMIRE-CHAN?
I MEAN, LAST TIME WE SAW EACH OTHER, YOU OBVIOUSLY THOUGHT I WASN'T GOOD ENOUGH, CALLING ME TRASH AND ALL.
HEE
OOH, YOU NOTICED? HOW SWEET!
YES, I HAVE CHANGED.
YOU SEE, I HAD ONE OF MY FRAGMENTS STRENGTHENED FOR ME!
.....?!

FWOOO
I'VE GOTTEN BETTER.
IN OTHER WORDS...
WHILE YOU'VE BEEN SCREWING AROUND WITHOUT A THOUGHT IN YOUR BRAIN-LESS LITTLE SKULL...
KRISH
KYA!
PLINK
UFF !!
NH...
...PAWS

MIX THAT "WIND" WITH A LITTLE BIT OF "WATER," AND YOU GET LIGHTNING SO STRONG...
IT MAKES MY OLD LIGHTNING LOOK LIKE PUNY STATIC.
BLISSFUL
SUCH LOVELY WIND...
EVEN ALL BY ITSELF...
IT'S STILL SO POWERFUL! OOOH, I THINK I'M IN LOVE!
WHAT...?
PUTTING WIND AND WATER TOGETHER PRODUCES... LIGHTNING?!
SKF
?!
I NEED TO BUY SOME TIME! THINK!
THERE HAS TO BE SOME WAY I CAN FIGHT HER!
FWOOOOO
WHSH

BTAM
!
!!
UNH!
WHP

SHE'S GOTTEN SO FAST!
FWFF
HOW AM I SUPPOSED TO--?
?!
CLNG
FWP

I HAVE FOUR KINDS OF VACCINE I CAN USE.

PUT THEM TOGETHER... AND YOU GET LIGHTNING!!
NO, WAIT! WATER AND WIND...
SKFF

OOH, EXCELLENT CHOICE!
OR WORSE...

BUT...
WHAT IF IT BACK-FIRES?
BTHMP
I MIGHT GO BERSERK...
BTHMP

MAYBE... JUST MAYBE...
IF I MIX TWO OF THEM TOGETHER, I'LL GET SOMETHING I CAN USE!
FWOOO

IF YOU WANT TO SHOW SOMEONE THE STARS...
THIS IS THE PERFECT PLACE TO DO IT!
DO I DO IT OR NOT?!
I... I HAVE TO!
THIS IS MY ONLY CHANCE...!!
TK-K

HUH...?
PLINK
BROKEN ...?!
TINKL

!!
AGH!
AWW, DID THAT HURT?
I MISSED ON PURPOSE, YOU KNOW.
HUH ...?!
SLMP
BTHMP
HEE HEE
THE VACCINE ...!
MY BODY WON'T MOVE...
DO YOU HAVE ANY IDEA HOW PATHETIC YOU LOOK RIGHT NOW, SUMIRE-CHAN?
BUT THAT...

THAT'S REALITY, GIRL!!
!!!
ヒ//
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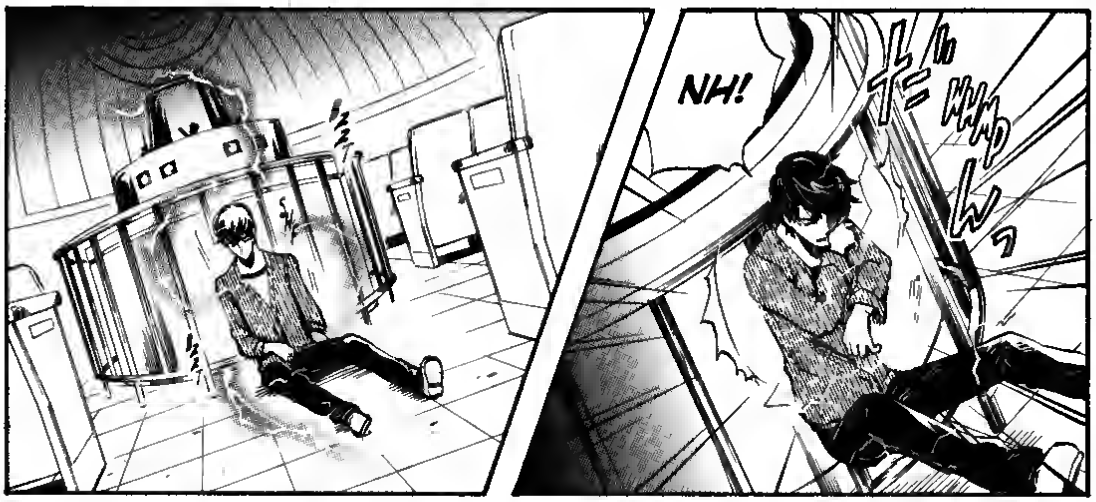

NH!

YOSHI...

YOSHIKI-SAN!!
YOSHIKI-SAN, WHY...?!
HMPH.
WHAT A WUSSY BOYFRIEND.
BUT...
TWD
NOW THAT I THINK ABOUT IT...
HE MAY NOT BE COMPLETELY USELESS.
MY LEGS...!
YOSHIKI-SAN!!

IF I WERE TO, SAY, ZAP HIM INTO A LUMP OF HUMAN CHARCOAL...
RIGHT HERE, IN FRONT OF POOR LITTLE SUMIRE-CHAN'S EYES, WHAT KIND OF EXPRESSION WOULD SHE MAKE?
OOH, I WONDER.
STARE

?!
TWITCH
STAFF ONLY
TMP
LUCIA!
LUCIA!!
IT'S SUMIRE...!
BAH!

SHE'S IN TROUBLE!!
OOH...
SWIFF...
HEH HEH HEH.

WELL DONE, RUKA. WELL DONE.
FINALLY !!
FLASH

.....
YOU...

SHF

WHA...?
YOSHIKI-SAN...?

WHAT THE HELL...?
HUH?!
WHAT DID THAT GUY JUST DO...?!
WHO... ARE YOU...?!
GRAB
WHA...?
PULL

ENOUGH.
IF YOU TRY TO HARM MY SUMIRE-CHAN AGAIN...
I'LL MAKE YOU REGRET IT.
MY SUMIRE-CHAN...?!
SHUT UP!!

K-KRAK
FSH-
SHAK
?!
WHA...?
IT... IT BOUNCED BACK AT HER?!

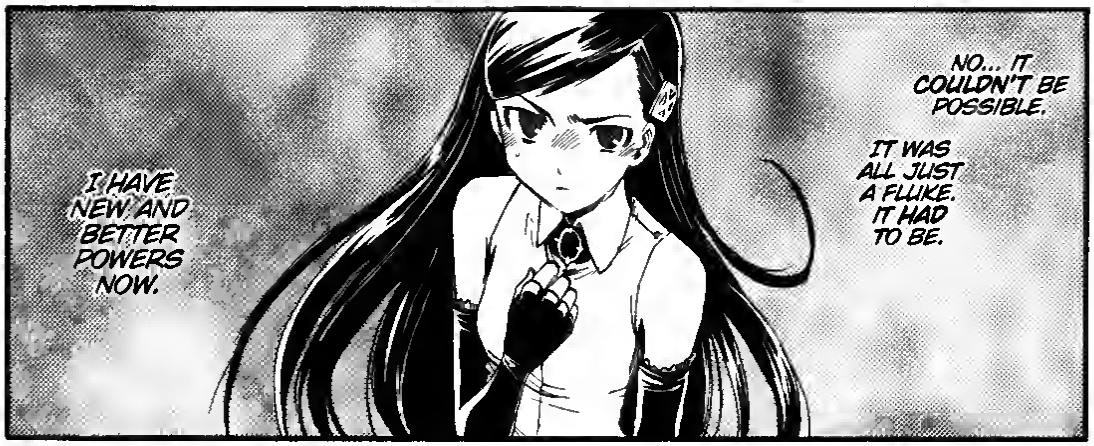
WHERE DID YOU GET THAT POWER?!
YOSHIKI-SAN...?
SMILE
DON'T YOU TRUST ME?
HUH?! BUT...!
SUMIRE-CHAN, LET ME HANDLE THIS, OKAY?
.....?!

URK
LIM...
I...

I TRUST YOU.

YES... I CAN FEEL IT NOW.
THE POWER AT MY BACK IS VERY STRONG.

BTHMP
WAIT, DOES THAT MAKE YOSHIKI-SAN...
SOMEONE LIKE LUCIA-SAN AND ME...?
BTHMP
GASP
HE REFLECTED MY LIGHT-NING?
THAT SHOULDN'T BE POSSIBLE!


NO... IT COULDN'T BE POSSIBLE.
IT WAS ALL JUST A FLUKE. IT HAD TO BE.
I HAVE NEW AND BETTER POWERS NOW.

I COULD EVER LOSE TO THIS LITTLE WEAKLING!
THERE'S NO WAY...

!!
THAT'S IT! I'VE HAD ENOUGH OF YOUR STUPID PARTY TRICKS!
FWOOSH

SHK
WHP
WHP
WHP
WHP
WHP

DON'T TELL ME THAT LITTLE REFLECTION THING IS YOUR ONLY TRICK?

WHAT'S THIS?
OH DEAR...

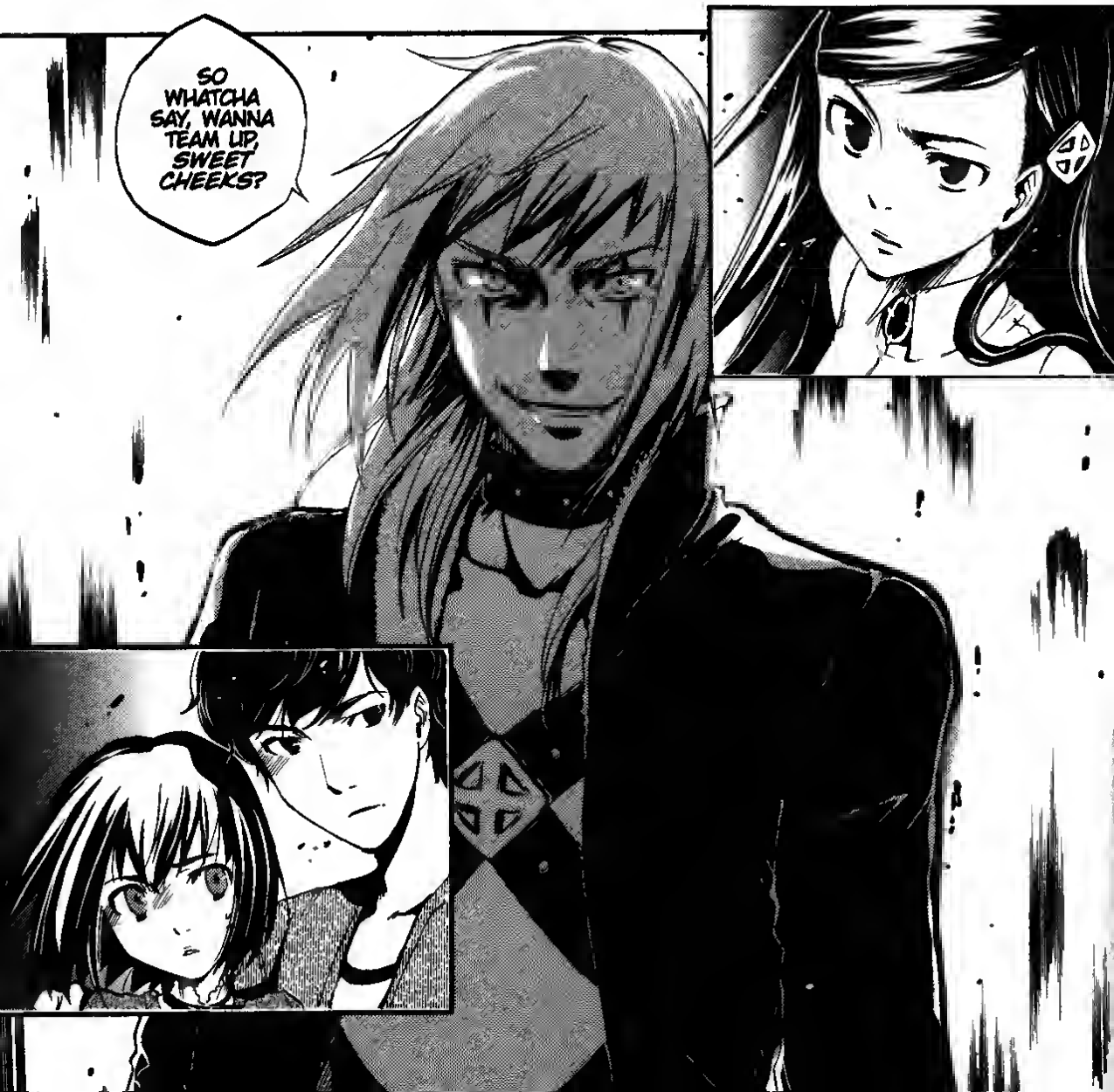
I THOUGHT YOU SAID YOU WERE GOING TO "MAKE ME REGRET IT"?
WHAT'S WRONG?

ALL JUST A SAD ATTEMPT TO BLUFF ME, HMM?
FWISH
HAH! YOU NEED ANOTHER THOUSAND YEARS OF PRACTICE BEFORE THAT'LL EVER WORK ON ME!!
IT'S TIME TO DI--

BWOOOSH
!!
?!
BWOOO
オ…
オ…
RUKA, BABE! ♪

YOU LOOK LIKE YOU'RE HAVIN'...
FUN.
GUY...
WHAT THE HELL ARE YOU DOING HERE?!
HELL, BABE...
EVEN GOT ME SOME NEW POWERS, TOO.
HEH. LIKE I'M LETTING YA GET A LEG UP ON ME.

SO CAN YOU REALLY BLAME ME FOR WANTING TO TAKE 'EM FOR A LITTLE SPIN?
TMD
WROOO


SO WHATCHA SAY, WANNA TEAM UP, SWEET CHEEKS?

PSHHHT
EP...
TCH!
INCOM-
PETENCE.
IDIOT FRIED MY "EYE" TOO
VRRRRR.MMMM

SUMIRE
...
PLEASE BE OKAY...!!

Jewelry
and
Clothes

Venus Vangard

YOU SURE WE'RE GOING THE RIGHT WAY, LOLA?!
I KNOW THAT! WE SHOULD BE THERE ANY MINUTE NOW.
BECAUSE WE'VE GOT TO HURRY! IF SUMIRE IS IN AS MUCH DANGER AS YOU SAY SHE IS--!
THEY'RE CLOSE.
I CAN FEEL IT.
YOU FEEL IT...?
ANY-WAY, JUST HURRY !!
GLARE
PLEASE, LET US BE IN TIME...!!

Piece 21 RED. BOUNDARIES.

BWOOOO
KIIII
WHH
HE...

THOOO
!!
MAGMA ...?!
HOOOOO!

HOT DAMN, I LOVE THIS FEELIN'!!
HELL...
I COULD GET ADDICTED TO THIS CRAP.
WELL, THAT WAS ONE HELLUVA "HELLO," GUY.
PSSSHHH
I TAKE IT YOU GOT ONE TOO?
YEP!
HEH HEH
DIDN'T EVEN HAVE TO SWEET TALK SONOKA-SAMA FOR IT EITHER.
.....?!

BET I SURPRISED YOU, DIDN'T I, LITTLE MISSY... AND, UH, WHOEVER YOU ARE, DUDE.
WHAT, DID YOU THINK YOU'D HAVE TOTAL PEACE AND QUIET UNTIL THE NEXT NIGHT OF FALLING STARS? HAH!
REAL SORRY TO BUST UP YOUR DATE AND ALL...
HEH HEH HEH!
!
THUD

FWOOSH
?!
WHA?!
GRIN
GRIN
BUT SONOKA-SAMA'S "HANDS OFF" RULE ON YOU AND THAT EYEPATCH CHICK IS OFFICIALLY EXPIRED.
SO I FIGURED I'D TRUSS YOU UP AND TAKE YOU IN. ♪

WSH
MPH!!
KREEEE

NO...
AH!
!
KRANNG
!!
NGK...
SKSHH
HUH...?
MY LEG. I'D HURT IT PRETTY BAD EARLIER...

YOSHIKI-SAN... HEALED IT...?
SUMIRE-CHAN! YOU MEANIE!
NO WAY...
BUT NOW...
IT DOESN'T HURT AT. ALL..
FWISH
!
STOP OGLING THE BOYS. YOU'RE SUPPOSED TO BE FIGHTING ME.
ACK...
HEH HEH!

FREEZE
?!
WSH
MY BODY...!
I CAN'T MOVE?!
OH... !
WHEW
GRAB
OVER-CONFIDENT MUCH?

NK...
SHWIP
AGH...!
FZZZZZ
YOSHIKI-SAN!!
RRG...
OH, DON'T WORRY, MAN. I'M NOT GONNA KILL YA.
I'LL TAKE YOU ALIVE.

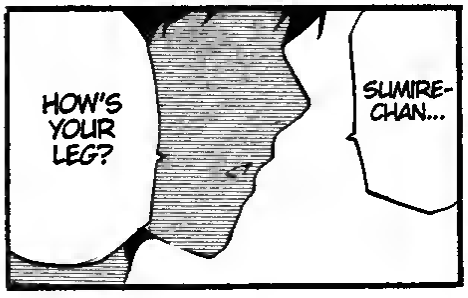
SO SAY GOODBYE TO THOSE ARMS AND LEGS OF YOURS...
'COURSE, CAN'T HAVE YOU RUNNING OFF, THOUGH.
SHF
PRETTY BO--
KOFF
ERGH?
TMK

!!
SHIRR
H-HEY...
HOLD ON A SEC, MAN.
HUK
HEH HEH HEH
LET'S GET SOME-THIN' STRAIGHT ...
HEH HEH HEH
A LITTLE STICK LIKE THIS AIN'T NEARLY ENOUGH TO KILL ME, NO MATTER WHERE YOU STAB.
KSH
解錠 オープン
OPEN.

?!
WHAT THE?!
NGH!
BTHMP
AH
AH
ARGGGHHH!!
OH MY GOD, THAT'S...
THAT'S A DESOUL-ING...!!
.....?!

SHLP
BOMB
AHHHH
...
SWISH
AGH...
!!
TWITCH
EEP
...!

TOUCH
STAY AWA...
?!
SLUMP
ST-STA...
STAY AWAY FROM ME...!!
GSH
SHIFT
000


HOW'S YOUR LEG?
SUMIRE-CHAN...

O-OH!
IT'S FINE NOW!
HUH?

GOOD. NOW RUN.

WHP

THERE'S ONE OTHER THING I NEED TO DO STILL.
NO.
WH-WHAT ABOUT YOU, YOSHIKI-SAN? YOU'RE COMING TOO, RIGHT...?
WHA...?
CHUCKLE
DON'T WORRY. I'LL MAKE IT UP TO YOU LATER. PROMISE.
BTHMP
HE'S SMILING THAT SMILE I LOVE SO MUCH...
LIKE THERE'S NOTHING WRONG AT ALL.
SO WHY...
DO I STILL HAVE SUCH A BAD FEELING ABOUT THIS?
N-N...

SUMIRE-CHAN?
?!
GLOMP
NO!!
IF I LET GO OF HIM NOW...
SHF
HE'S GOING TO GO AWAY...
YOU COME TOO, YOSHIKI-SAN! PLEASE!
SUMIRE-CHAN.
SOME-WHERE FAR AWAY WHERE I'LL NEVER FIND HIM.
I JUST KNOW IT...

THAT...

SWEET SCENT AGAIN...

SKREEEE
BTAM
THIS IS IT, RIGHT?
cine
TMP
TMP
HEY! LUCIA, WAIT!
YEAH.
TMP
TMP
TMP
!
TMP
TMP
TMP
TMP

SUMIRE ?!
SUMI...
?!
TOTTER
WHAT THE...
SHE'S BEEN PUT UNDER SOME KIND OF SPELL...?!
THEY DID THIS?!
LUCIA!
GRIND

H-HEY! LUCIA...!!
TMP
TMP
TMP
WMP
ACK!
PERFECT! LOLA, LOOK AFTER SUMIRE, OKAY?
HUH ?!
TP TP TP TP
QUIT RUNNING OFF BY YOURSELF! JEEZ!
ZKK
TMP
TMP
TMP
TMP
A KEKKAI?!
RG...
COMPARED TO THIS ONE, THE ONE OUTSIDE MAKES A WET PAPER BAG LOOK STURDY...!!

AGK ...
SLUMP
I SMELL VIRUSES!
SOME-THING HAS TO BE GOING ON INSIDE HERE...!!
!!
BATHMP
VIRUSES AND...
LUCIA ?!
BTHMP
BTHMP
AGHHH
AH!
AHH!
THIS IS ONE OF THOSE "ATTACKS" YOU SOME-TIMES HAVE, RIGHT...?
UH-OH...

GYAAHHHHHH!!
DARKNESS AND...
LIGHT...
AHHHH!!
EVEN WITH MY EYES CLOSED TIGHT, I CAN STILL SEE IT...
COMING CLOSER, EVER CLOSER...
IT'S GOING TO SWALLOW ME!!
LUCIA!
AAGN...
UNH...

AHN ...?!
TWITCH
WHO ...?
UGH...
HANG IN THERE, LUCIA!
WE'RE GETTING OUT OF HERE! NOW!
NH...
ZING
...?
SHVR
?!

OH...
IT'S JUST YOU. HMPH.
HEH HEH HEH...
YOU SMELL REAL GOOD...
DIDJA KNOW THAT?
?!

HEY ...!
HEH HEH!
WHAT THE HELL DO YOU THINK YOU'RE DOING, GUY?!
?!

HE'S BECOME A VIRUS?!
HE'H HE'H HE'H!
THAT DIDN'T HURT AT ALL.
HE'H...
PSHHH
THAT YOSHIKI GUY DESOULED HIM...
OH, YEAH!
!
!!
HUH? WHERE'D HE GO?!

I...
I...
MUMBLE
WHAT?
POWER?
MUMBLE
I...
MUMBLE
MUMBLE
I MUST...
WHUP
GK...
WHO CARES ABOUT HIM, RUKA? LET'S PLAY!!
FWISH
.....?!

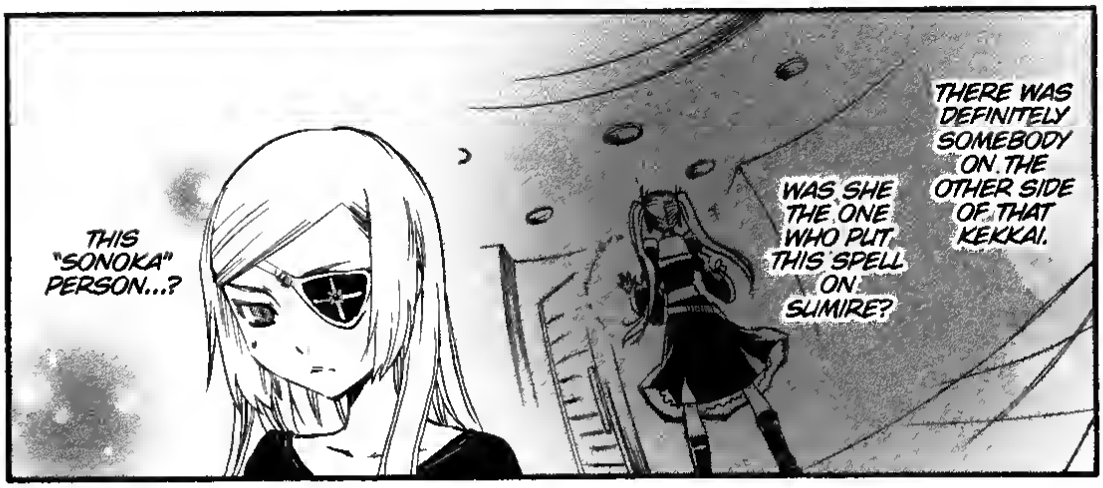
WELL DONE, GUY.
THUK
ENJOY YOUR FINAL REST.
GUH...
THD
AH...
GRRBL
S...
TAP

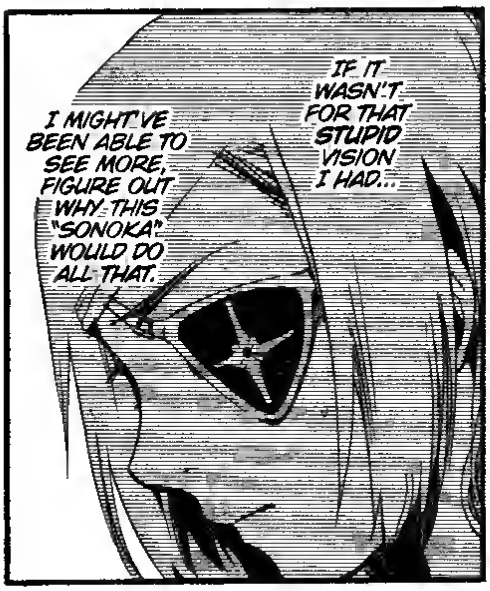
SONOKA-SAMA...
WHY...?
IF YOU JUST ENSOULED HIM WITH ANOTHER FRAGMENT, GUY WOULD HAVE BEEN FINE...!
HM? I THOUGHT I ALREADY EXPLAINED THAT, DEAR.
BOTH YOU AND GUY...
ARE NOTHING MORE THAN "CONTAINERS."
THE IMPORTANT THING IS THE CONTENTS. ONCE THAT IS LOST...
PSHHHH
I HAVE NO FURTHER USE FOR YOU.
FORTU-NATELY...
GUY FINALLY DID SOMETHING USEFUL FOR ONCE.
.....!

HOW SURPRISING, FOR YOUR SILLY LITTLE GAMES TO COME ACROSS THIS.
TOK
TOK
SKNGH
NEVER IN EVEN MY SWEETEST DREAMS DID I EXPECT THIS DAY TO COME SO SOON.
?!
TOK
TOK
ANH ...
TOK
FFOOO

HEH...
HEH HEH ...
AHA HA HA HA HA HA HA HA!!!
SHUK
.....!!

IT'S ALL RIGHT, LOLA. I'M FINE NOW.
BUT...
YEAH... SUMIRE.
THE SPELL ON HER STILL WON'T BREAK.


THIS "SONOKA" PERSON...?
WAS SHE THE ONE WHO PUT THIS SPELL ON SUMIRE?
THERE WAS DEFINITELY SOMEBODY ON THE OTHER SIDE OF THAT KEKKAI.

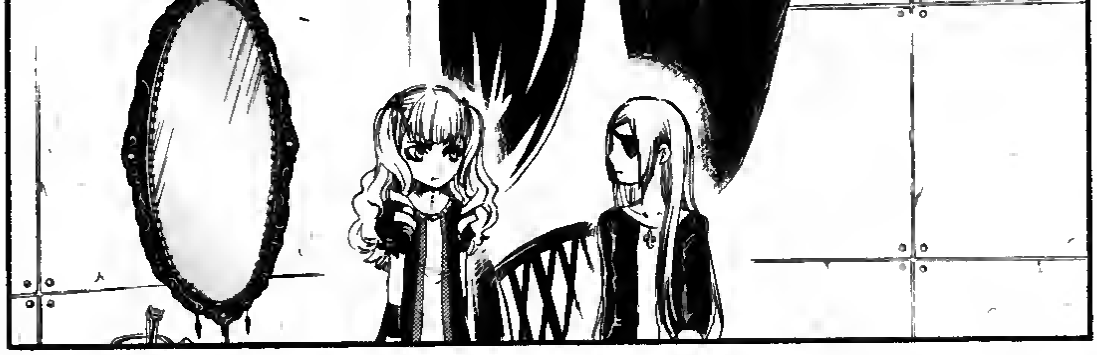

I MIGHT'VE BEEN ABLE TO SEE MORE, FIGURE OUT WHY THIS "SONOKA" WOULD DO ALL THAT.
IF IT WASN'T FOR THAT STUPID VISION I HAD...

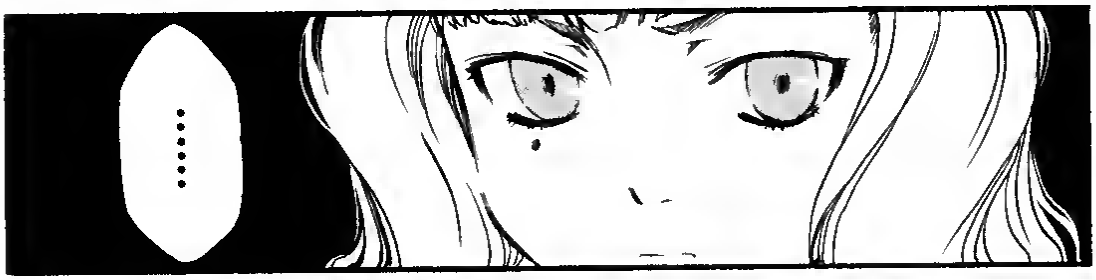
I CAN'T UNDERSTAND IT.
BUT IF THAT'S THE CASE, WHY'D SHE LET SUMIRE GET AWAY?
SHE HAD THE PERFECT OPPORTUNITY TO GET RID OF SUMIRE COMPLETELY. WHY BOTHER WITH A SPELL THAT JUST LET HER WALK OUT OF THERE LIKE A ZOMBIE?

LOLA.

WHILE WE'RE ON THE SUBJECT OF THINGS I NEED TO KNOW MORE ABOUT...
THERE'S ONE OTHER THING THAT'S BEEN BUGGING ME...

TELL ME...
HOW DID YOU KNOW WHERE SUMIRE WAS?
TWITCH
HUH...?
WHEN WE FIRST ARRIVED AT THE PLANETARIUM, THERE WASN'T EVEN A WHIFF OF ANY VIRUSES.
BUT YOU...
YOU REALIZED SUMIRE WAS THERE EVEN BEFORE I DID. HOW?

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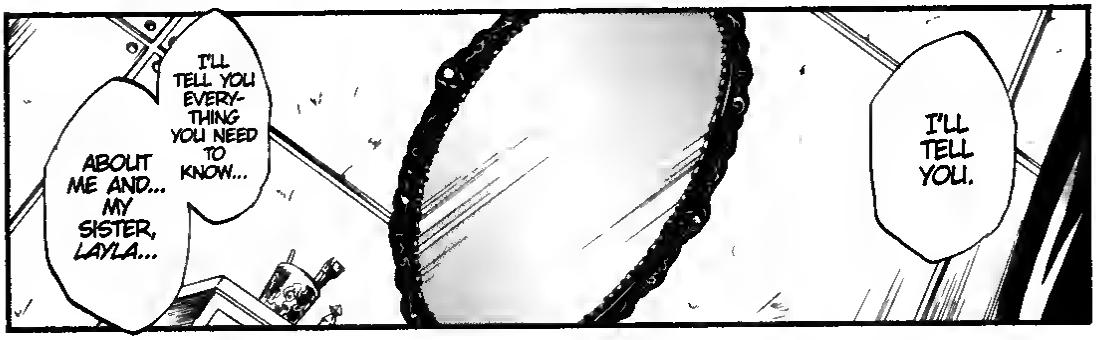
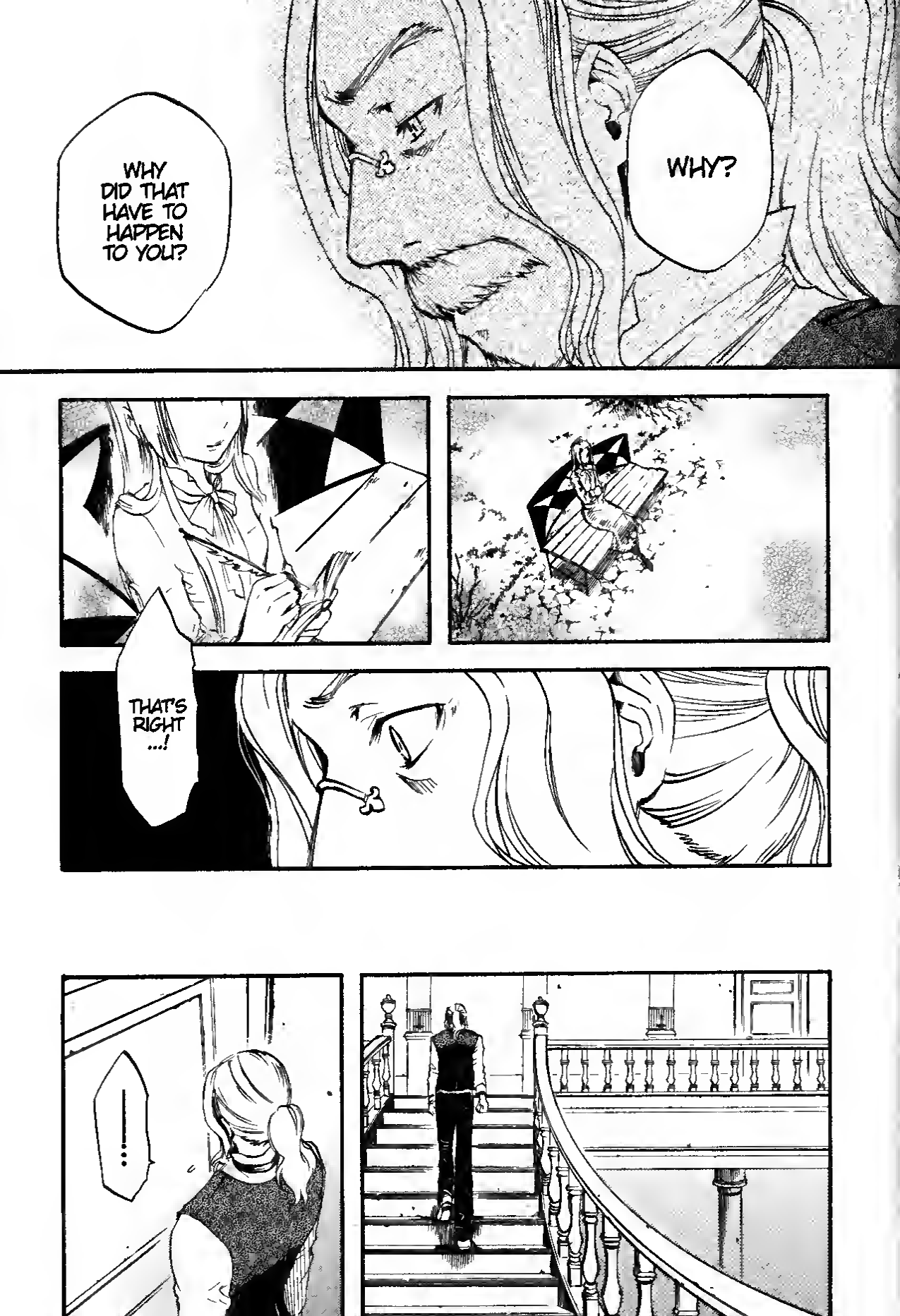
ALL RIGHT...


I'LL TELL YOU EVERY-THING YOU NEED TO KNOW...
ABOUT ME AND... MY SISTER, LAYLA...
I'LL TELL YOU.

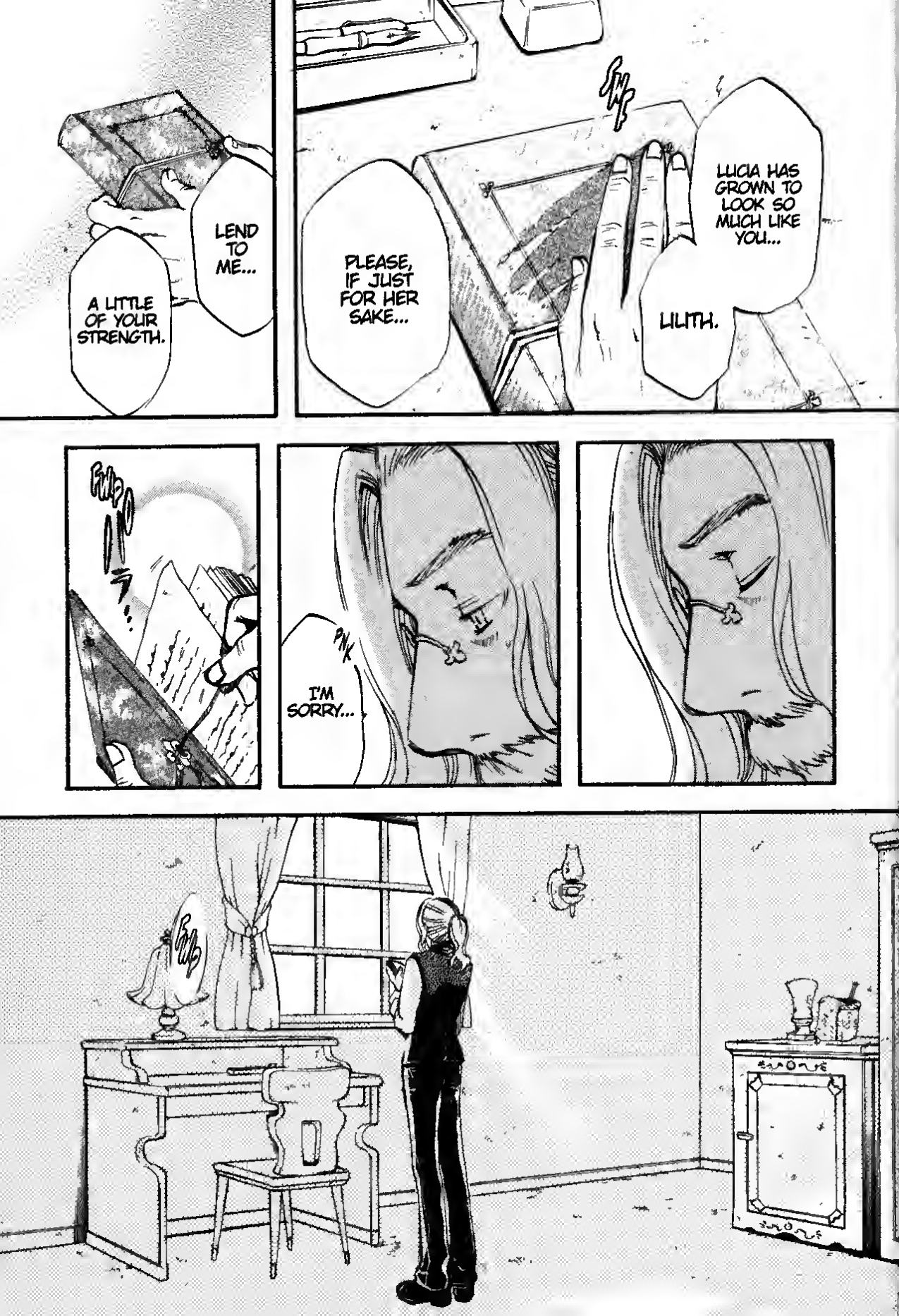
NOT THIS ONE EITHER...

TNK
SIGH
WELL...
AT LEAST IT'S ANOTHER LOVELY DAY OUTSIDE...

NACHASH...
WHY DON'T WE EAT LUNCH ON THE LAWN...
ALL THREE OF US.
IT'S LOVELY OUTSIDE TODAY.
SQUEE
.....
LILITH, TELL ME PLEASE...

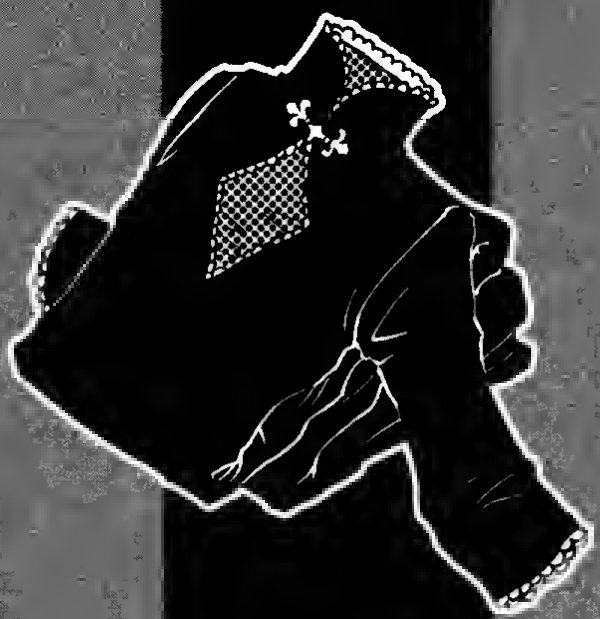

WHY DID THAT HAVE TO HAPPEN TO YOU?
WHY?
THAT'S RIGHT ...!
!!!

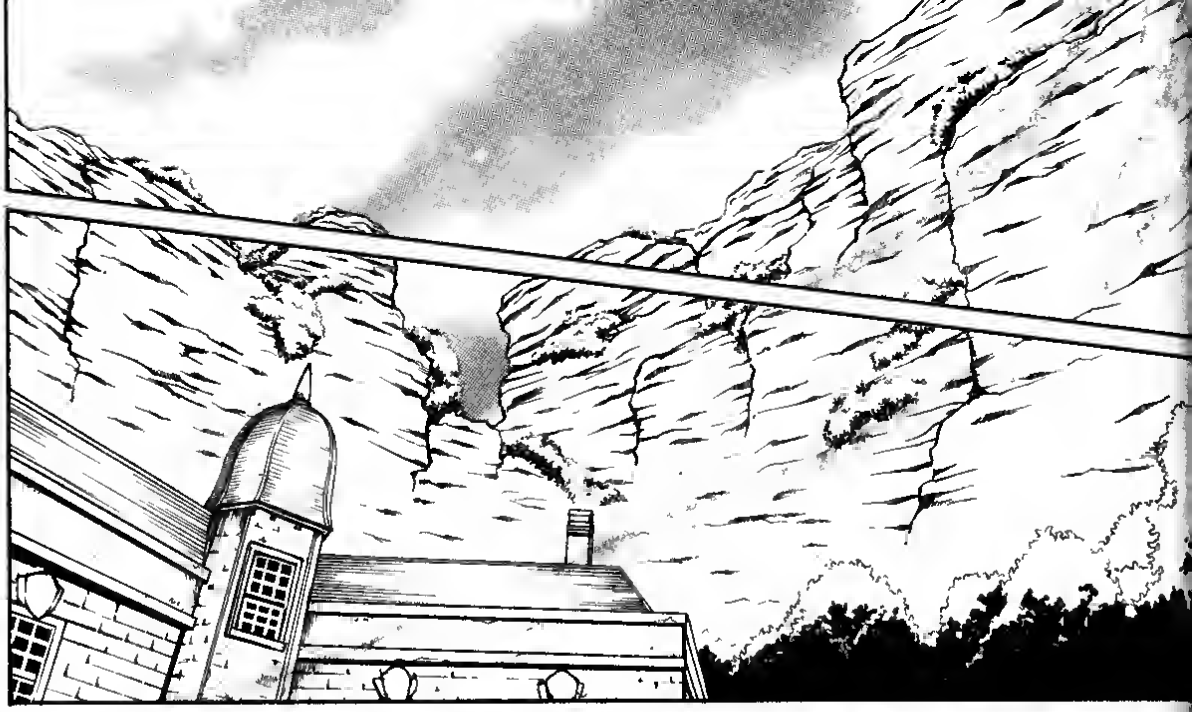
KREEE
KLK
BA-THMP
TIME FLIES SO QUICKLY ...
HAS IT *REALLY* BEEN FIFTEEN YEARS?

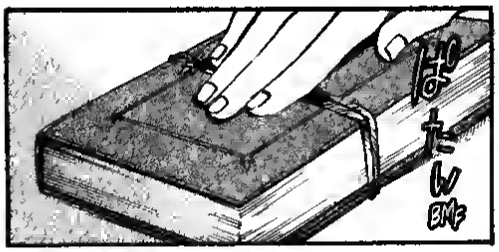

LEND TO ME...
A LITTLE OF YOUR STRENGTH.
PLEASE, IF JUST FOR HER SAKE...
LUCIA HAS GROWN TO LOOK SO MUCH LIKE YOU...
LILITH.
I'M SORRY...

Jewelry
and
Clothes

Venus Vangard



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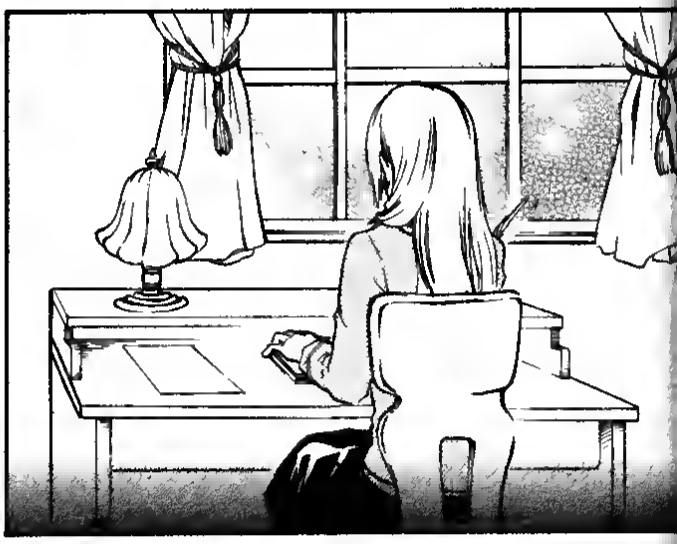
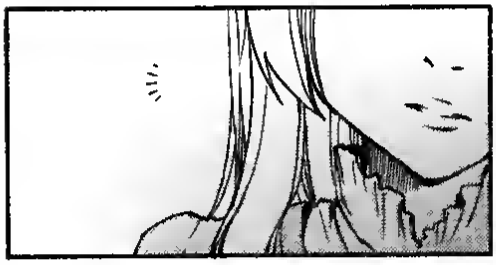
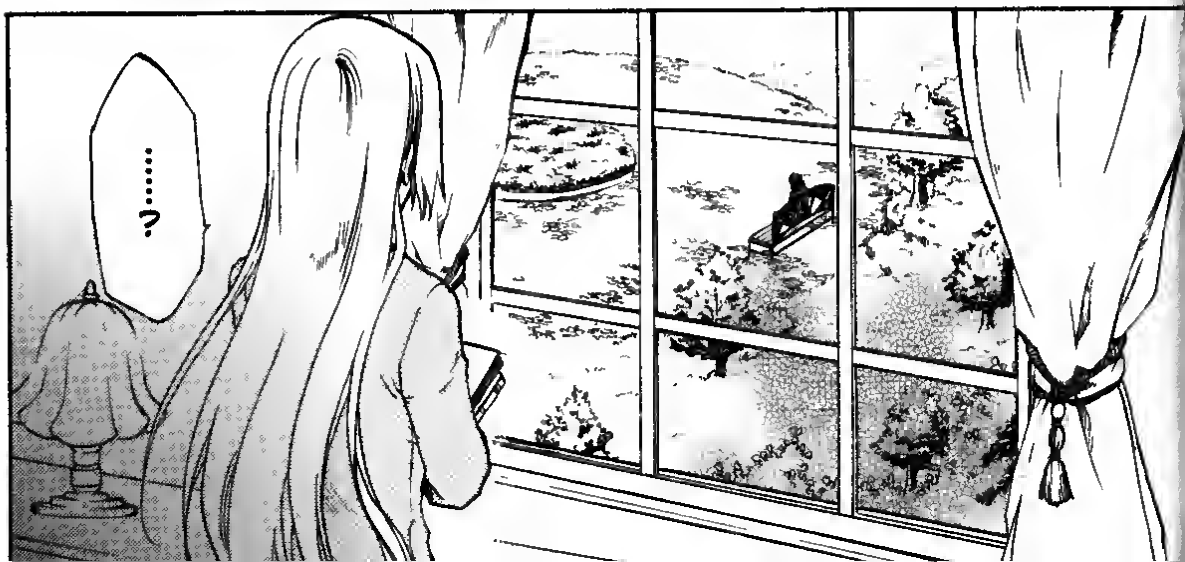
BMF



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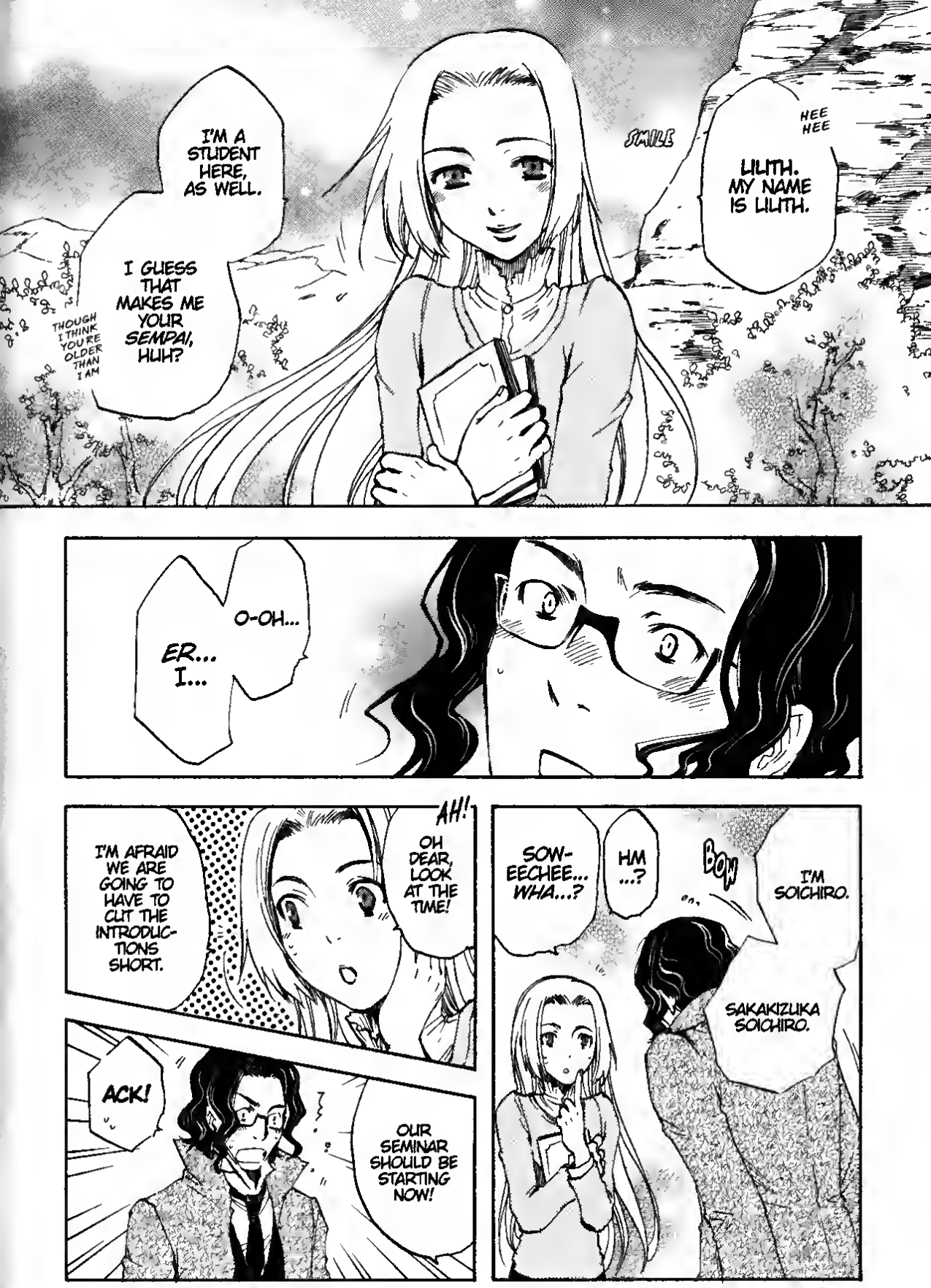
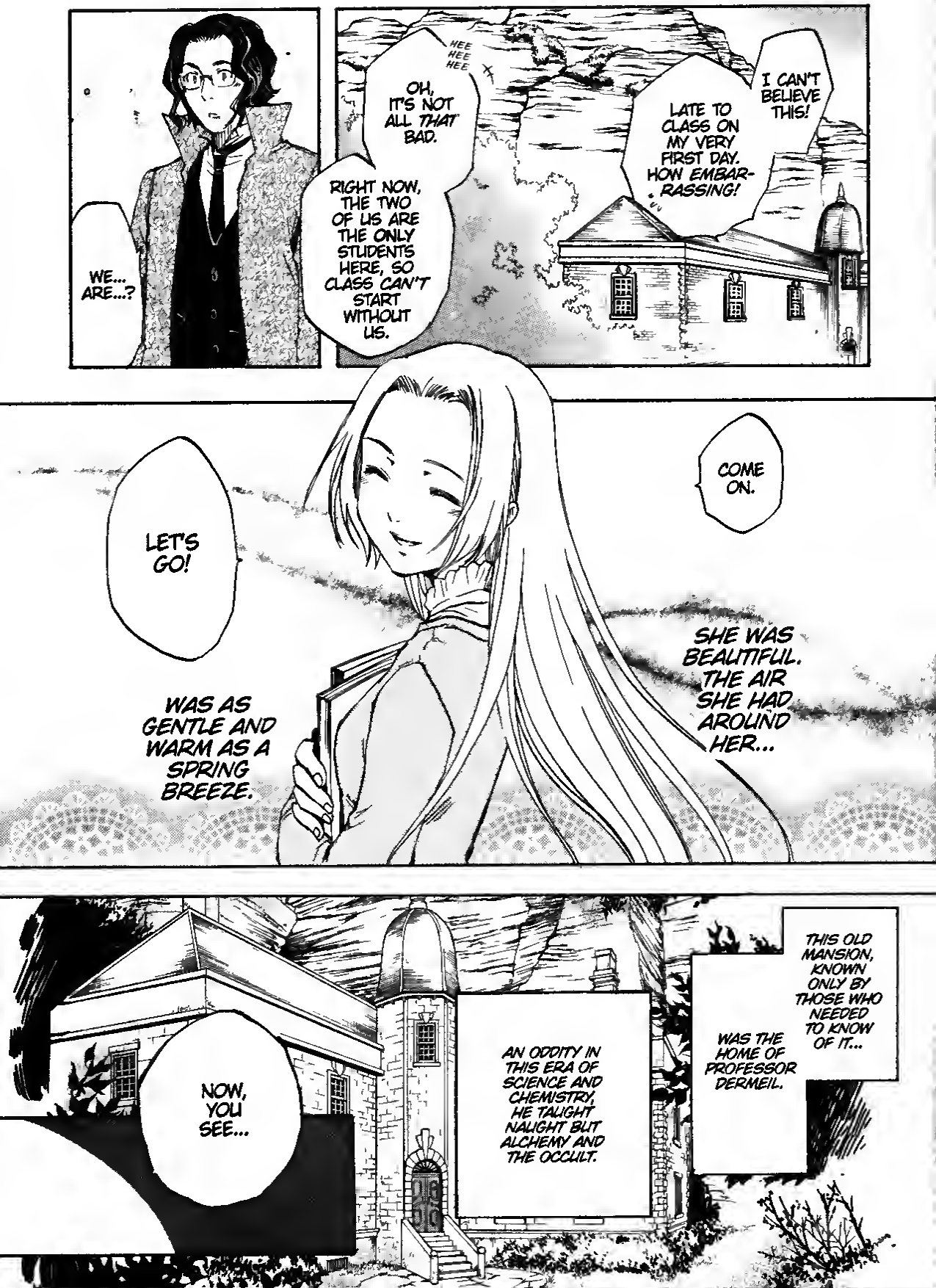
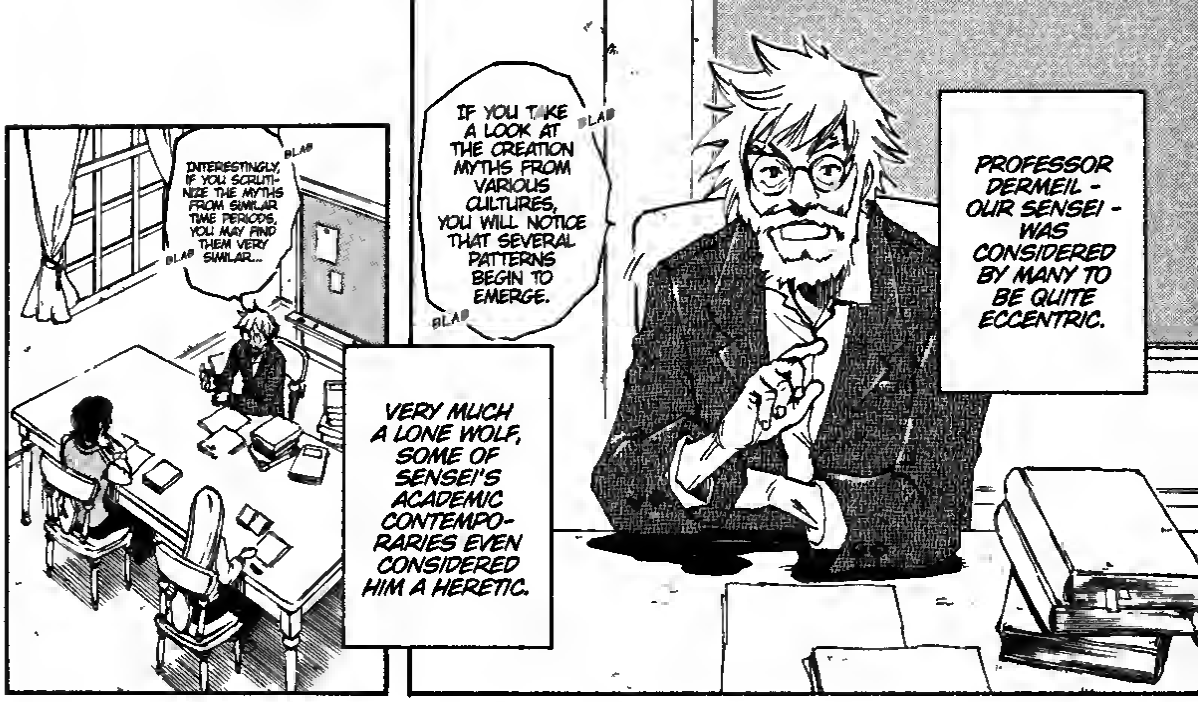
Piece 22

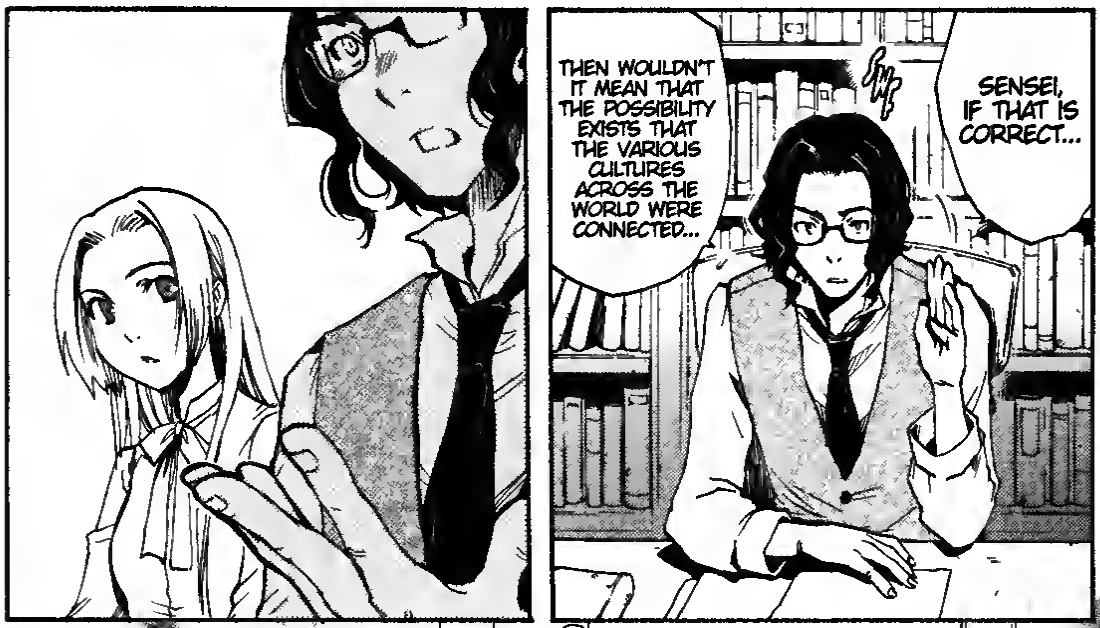
SORROW. IMITATIONS.

EXCUSE ME...
YOU'RE THE NEW RESEARCH STUDENT...
RIGHT?
UH... HELLOOO?
?
...
TWITCH
?!
P-PLEASE PARDON ME.
I WAS SO ABSORBED IN MY READING THAT...
I DIDN'T NOTICE YOU THERE, MISS, UM...?
YEEP!!
ACK!
ME?
M...
THMP
HUH?!
THMP
THMP

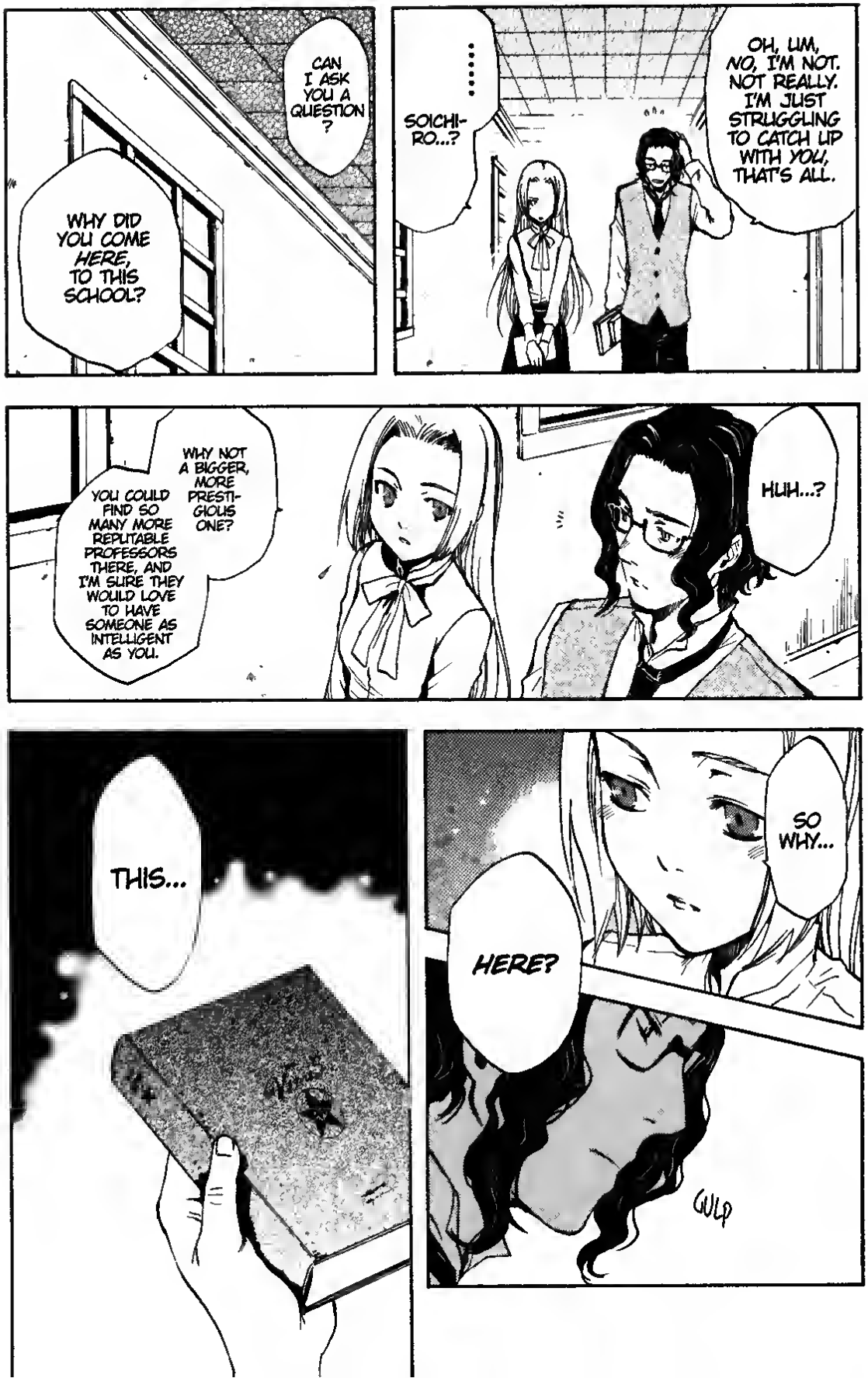

I'M A STUDENT HERE, AS WELL.
I GUESS THAT MAKES ME YOUR SEMPAI, HUH?
THOUGH I THINK YOU'RE OLDER THAN I AM
SMILE
HEE HEE
LILITH. MY NAME IS LILITH.
O-OH...
ER... I...
AH!
OH DEAR, LOOK AT THE TIME!
I'M AFRAID WE ARE GOING TO HAVE TO CUT THE INTRODUC-TIONS SHORT.
ACK!
OUR SEMINAR SHOULD BE STARTING NOW!
SOW-EECHEE... WHA...?
HM ...?
BOW
I'M SOICHIRO.
SAKAKIZUKA SOICHIRO.


I CAN'T BELIEVE THIS!
LATE TO CLASS ON MY VERY FIRST DAY. HOW EMBARRASSING!
HEE HEE HEE
OH, IT'S NOT ALL THAT BAD.
RIGHT NOW, THE TWO OF US ARE THE ONLY STUDENTS HERE, SO CLASS CAN'T START WITHOUT US.
WE... ARE...?
COME ON.
LET'S GO!
SHE WAS BEAUTIFUL. THE AIR SHE HAD AROUND HER...
WAS AS GENTLE AND WARM AS A SPRING BREEZE.
THIS OLD MANSION, KNOWN ONLY BY THOSE WHO NEEDED TO KNOW OF IT...
WAS THE HOME OF PROFESSOR DERMEIL.
AN ODDITY IN THIS ERA OF SCIENCE AND CHEMISTRY, HE TAUGHT NAUGHT BUT ALCHEMY AND THE OCCULT.
NOW, YOU SEE...

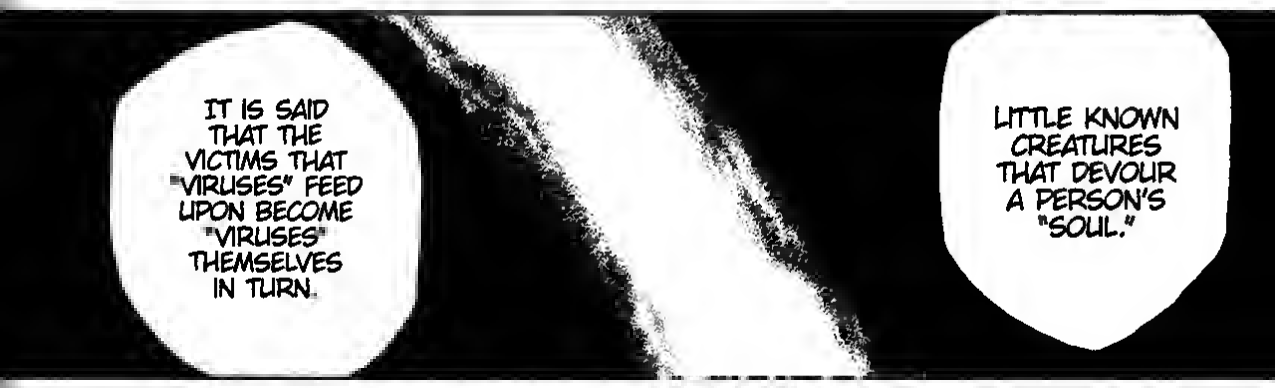

PROFESSOR DERMEIL - OUR SENSEI - WAS CONSIDERED BY MANY TO BE QUITE ECCENTRIC.
IF YOU TAKE A LOOK AT THE CREATION MYTHS FROM VARIOUS CULTURES, YOU WILL NOTICE THAT SEVERAL PATTERNS BEGIN TO EMERGE.
BLAB
BLAB
INTERESTINGLY, IF YOU SCRUTINIZE THE MYTHS FROM SIMILAR TIME PERIODS, YOU MAY FIND THEM VERY SIMILAR...
BLAB
BLAB
VERY MUCH A LONE WOLF, SOME OF SENSEI'S ACADEMIC CONTEMPORARIES EVEN CONSIDERED HIM A HERETIC.


SENSEI, IF THAT IS CORRECT...
THEN WOULDN'T IT MEAN THAT THE POSSIBILITY EXISTS THAT THE VARIOUS CULTURES ACROSS THE WORLD WERE CONNECTED...

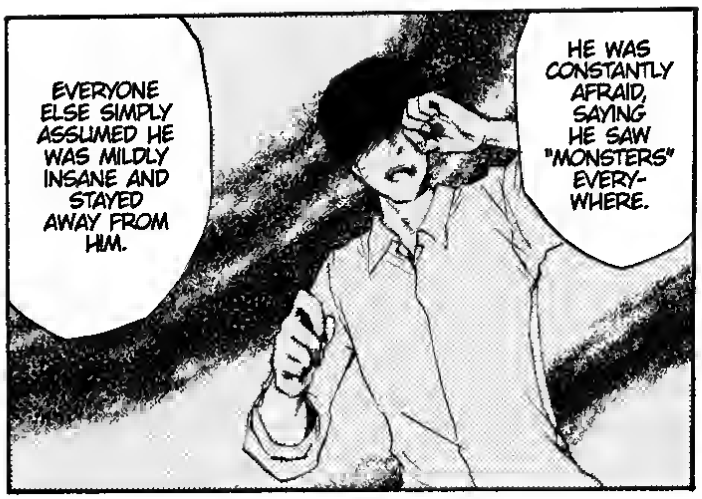
MY, YOU'RE QUITE THE SERIOUS STUDY.
HM?

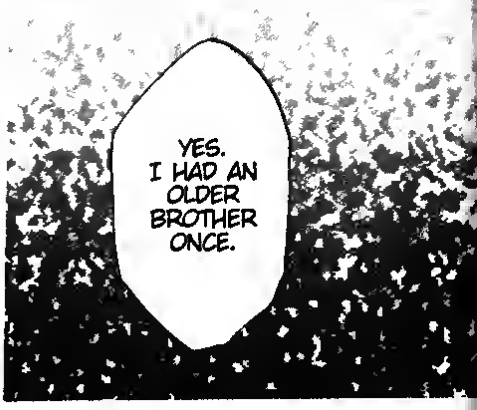

CAN I ASK YOU A QUESTION?
WHY DID YOU COME HERE, TO THIS SCHOOL?
SOICHI-RO...?
.....
OH, UM, NO, I'M NOT. NOT REALLY. I'M JUST STRUGGLING TO CATCH UP WITH YOU, THAT'S ALL.
YOU COULD FIND SO MANY MORE REPUTABLE PROFESSORS THERE, AND I'M SURE THEY WOULD LOVE TO HAVE SOMEONE AS INTELLIGENT AS YOU.
WHY NOT A BIGGER, MORE PRESTI-GIOUS ONE?
HUH...?
THIS...
HERE?
SO WHY...
GULP

THAT BOOK!
SENSEI WROTE IT!
"VIRUS."

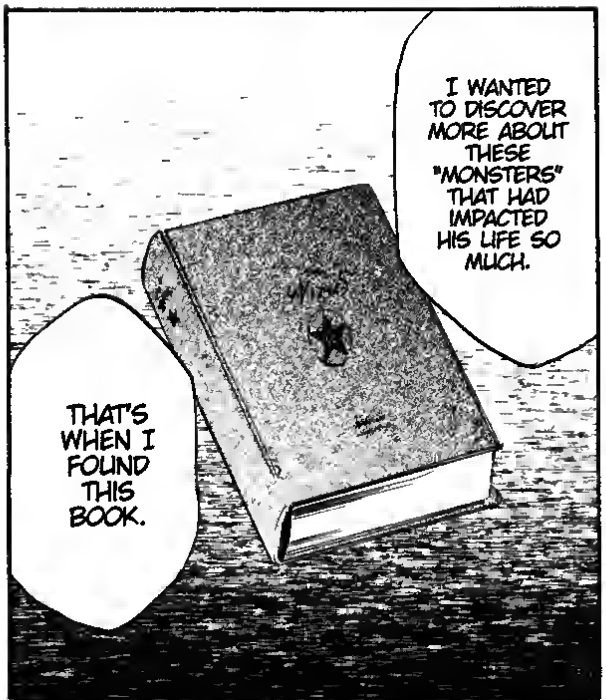

LITTLE KNOWN CREATURES THAT DEVOUR A PERSON'S "SOUL."
IT IS SAID THAT THE VICTIMS THAT "VIRUSES" FEED UPON BECOME "VIRUSES" THEMSELVES IN TURN.

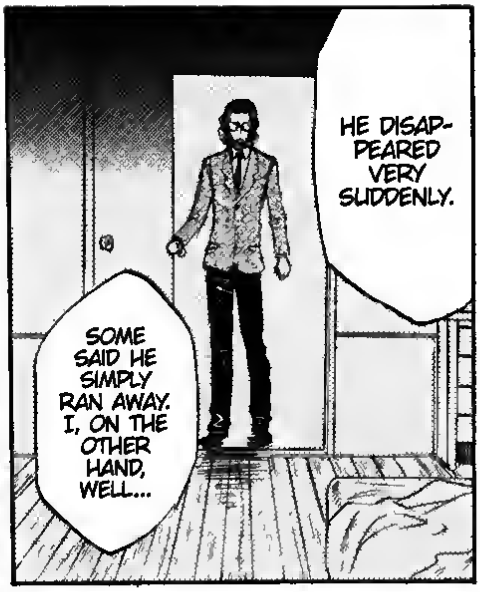
I CAME ACROSS THIS BOOK PURELY BY ACCIDENT WHEN BROWSING THROUGH AN ANTIQUE BOOKSTORE. THE MOMENT I LAID MY HAND UPON IT, A CHILL RAN DOWN MY SPINE.
I KNEW INSTANTLY THAT I HAD FOUND A CLUE THAT COULD LEAD ME TO MY REVENGE.
YOUR REVENGE ...?


HE WAS CONSTANTLY AFRAID, SAYING HE SAW "MONSTERS" EVERY-WHERE.
EVERYONE ELSE SIMPLY ASSUMED HE WAS MILDLY INSANE AND STAYED AWAY FROM HIM.

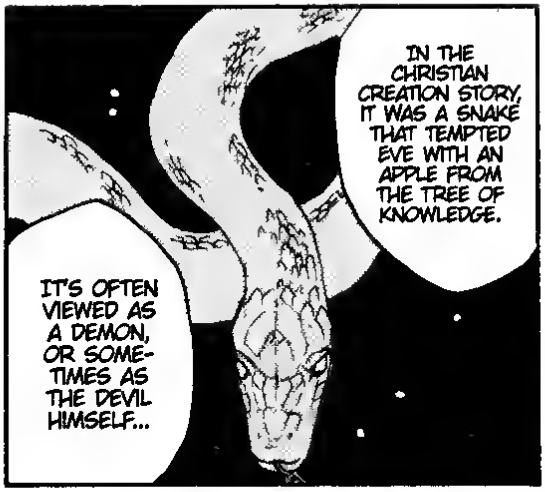

YES. I HAD AN OLDER BROTHER ONCE.

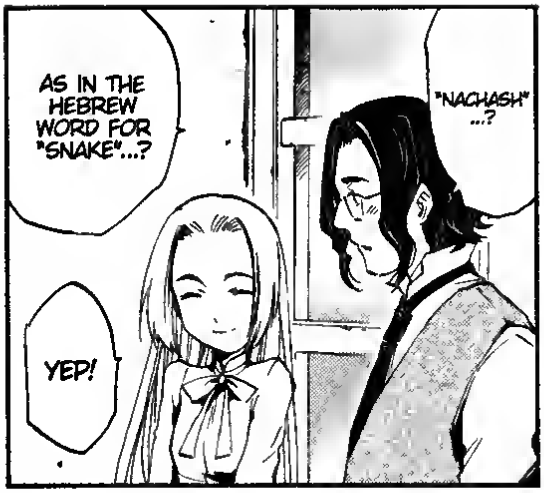
FIRST AND FOREMOST, HE COULD TELL ME, IN SOME GREAT DETAIL EVEN...
EXACTLY WHAT THESE "MONSTERS" I COULD NOT SEE LOOKED LIKE.
BUT KNOWING HIM AS I DID, I COULD NOT BELIEVE THAT THESE "MONSTERS" WERE MERE HALLUCINATIONS.

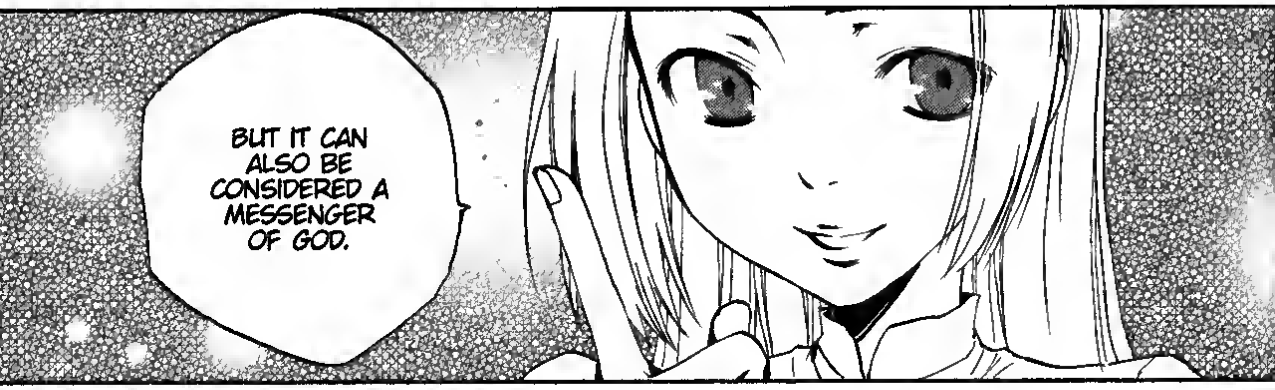

I WANTED TO DISCOVER MORE ABOUT THESE "MONSTERS" THAT HAD IMPACTED HIS LIFE SO MUCH.
THAT'S WHEN I FOUND THIS BOOK.

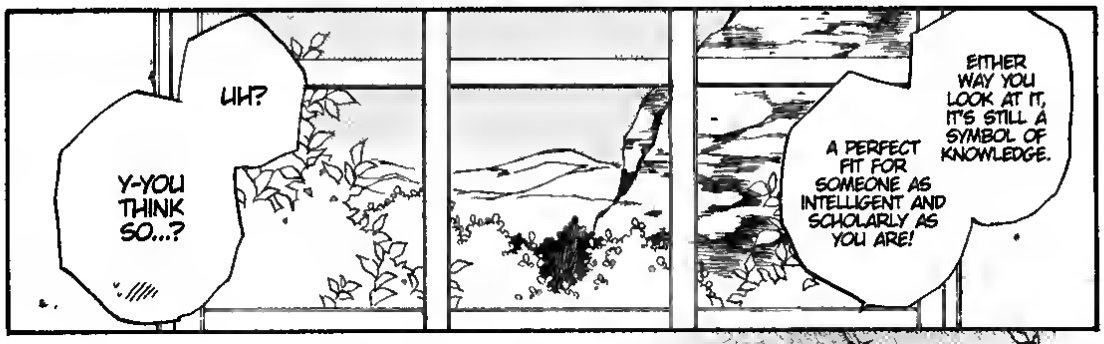

HE DISAP-PEARED VERY SUDDENLY.
SOME SAID HE SIMPLY RAN AWAY. I, ON THE OTHER HAND, WELL...

FOR US...
THIS WAS THE ONLY PLACE WE COULD GO.
OH...
SO THAT'S WHAT HAPPENED.
I'M SORRY.
NO... IT'S OKAY.
I WAS JUST A LITTLE CURIOUS ABOUT WHAT REASONS A PERSON MIGHT HAVE TO CHOOSE COMING HERE.
?
.....
THEN, YOU...
AHA!
I KNOW!
YOUR NICKNAME!
YOUR REAL NAME IS A LITTLE DIFFICULT TO PRO-NOUNCE, YOU KNOW.
HUH?
WHRL
HOW ABOUT "NACHASH" ?


IN THE CHRISTIAN CREATION STORY, IT WAS A SNAKE THAT TEMPTED EVE WITH AN APPLE FROM THE TREE OF KNOWLEDGE.
IT'S OFTEN VIEWED AS A DEMON, OR SOMETIMES AS THE DEVIL HIMSELF...


"NACHASH"...?
AS IN THE HEBREW WORD FOR "SNAKE"...?
YEP!


BUT IT CAN ALSO BE CONSIDERED A MESSENGER OF GOD.


EITHER WAY YOU LOOK AT IT, IT'S STILL A SYMBOL OF KNOWLEDGE.
A PERFECT FIT FOR SOMEONE AS INTELLIGENT AND SCHOLARLY AS YOU ARE!
UH?
Y-YOU THINK SO...?

TIME PASSED...
AND THE SEASONS BEGAN TO CHANGE.

AND THAT'S WHEN HE SUDDENLY RETURNED.
FWIP FWIP
!
WHAT THE?!
?!
WHAT'S GOING ON...?!
KLUNK

THIS WIND...
?!
LUCIF...?!
TMP
WHA...?!
SLUMP
NGH...!

I... NH... I'M HOME...
LILITH...
LUCIF...?!
GET... GET SENSEI...
WAIT! DON'T MOVE! YOUR WOUNDS WILL OPEN!
WSH
OH MY GOD, YOU'RE HURT!!
TE TE TD
.....?!

LUCIF!!
ZWG
LIM...
WSH
I...
I'LL GO GET SENSEI.
IT WAS A VIRUS, WASN'T IT...
LUCIF?
A VIRUS DID THIS TO YOU!
N... NO...

IT WASN'T.
THE GUY...
HE CALLED HIMSELF...
A "SORCERER."
.....?!
I WAS OUT HUNTING.
FOUND A NEST OF VIRUSES IN SOME OLD CASTLE RUINS.
SO I WENT IN TO CLEAN THEM OUT, LIKE I ALWAYS DO.
HYAH!

SORRY...
BUT YOU GUYS SCARE LILITH.
TCH!
YOU SLIMEBALLS ARE REALLY COMING OUT OF THE WOODWORK TODAY, AIN'TCHA?
SLORD
SO, NOTHING PERSONAL, BUT YOU'VE GOTTA GO!
BWOOOOSH
PURIFYING FIRE, HEED MY CALL!!
FOOSH

WHEW...
PSHHHH
THERE, THAT'S D...
UH?!
TWITCH
YOU ARE AN INTERESTING ONE, YOUNG MAN.
GASP!

OOPS!
HNH!
ZWSH
I AM AION.
A SORCERER IN SEARCH OF THE "TRUE WORLD."
NOW, NOW. DO NOT MISTAKE ME, YOUNG MAN.
I AM NO VIRUS.
ZSH
?!
HMM...
A... SORCERER...?!

IMPRES-SIVE. "FIRE." "WIND." "EARTH."
ALL THREE OF THOSE, HM?
HEY! WHAT THE HELL DID YOU DO THAT FOR...?!
SHRIP
WHAT THE?!
COME, WIND OF JUDGE-MENT!!
WHO THE HELL ARE YOU?!
FWOO
HUH?!
HOW'D YOU KNOW ABOUT MY POWERS...?
SMIRK
?!
FSH
SHAK

YOU WILL DO NICELY.
OH, EXCELLENT.
HMM
?!
SHYR
ARE ORIGINAL FRAGMENTS OF THE TRUE WORLD.
ALL THREE PIECES YOU BEAR...

SHFL
?!
WHAT ARE YOU DOING?!
!!
SHING
FSH
YOU...
ARE PERFECT MATERIAL FOR "THE GATE."
?!
ZLUP
HERE...
SLUK

ALLOW ME TO GIVE YOU A... GIFT.
WITH THIS, A FLEDGLING WORLD WILL BE BORN INSIDE YOU.
WHA...?
H-HEY! STOP! DON'T...!!
KILL
ISN'T THAT SPLENDID?
GAAAH
ARRHHH!!

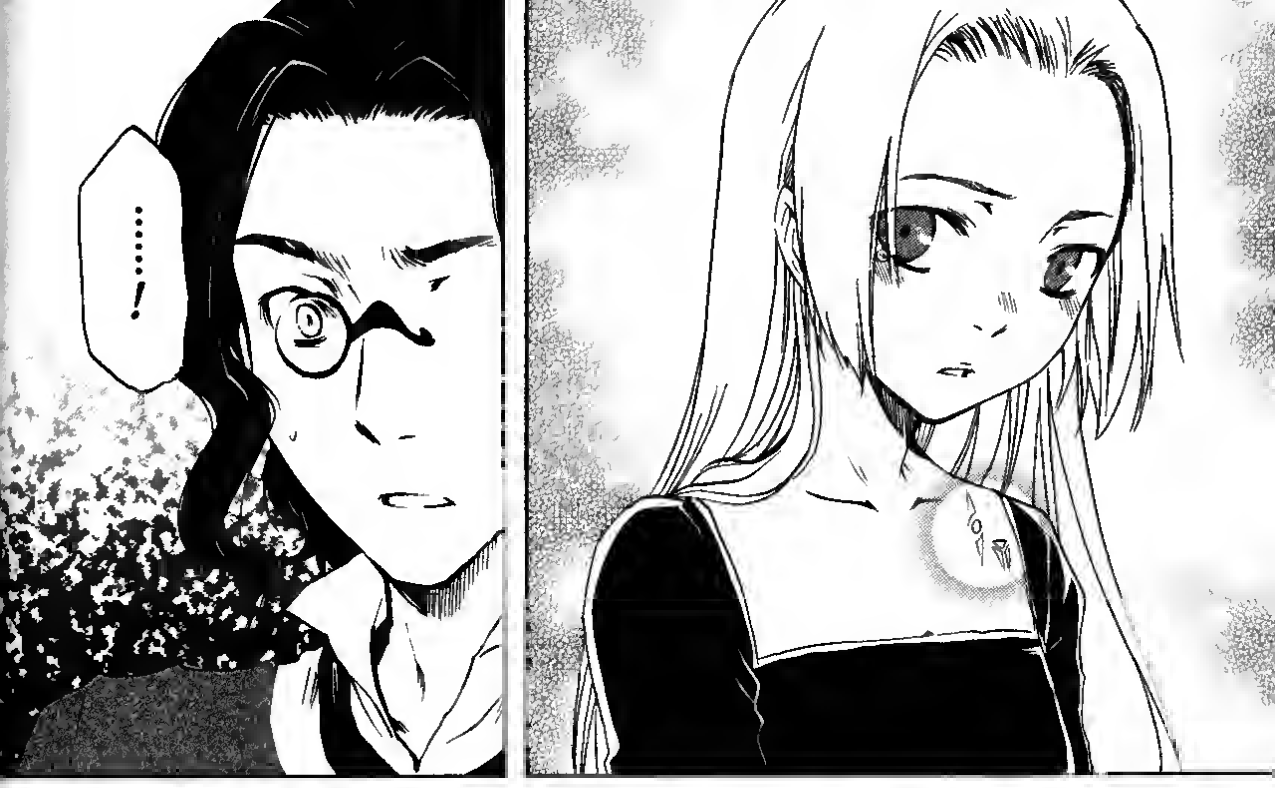
HURRY! TAKE HIM TO HIS ROOM!
LUCIF IS BACK?!
LUCIF, ENOUGH. YOU DON'T HAVE TO SAY ANY MORE!
WHEN I CAME TO...
THAT GUY WAS GONE.
I...
THE COLOR OF YOUR LEFT EYE...
BUT I MUST ADMIT, THE REST OF IT BAFFLES ME.
WELL, THE BLEEDING HAS STOPPED.
I SEE NO SIGILS ANYWHERE.
SIGILS?
?
.....!
AND THE SIGILS ON YOUR ARM HAVE CHANGED DRASTI-CALLY.

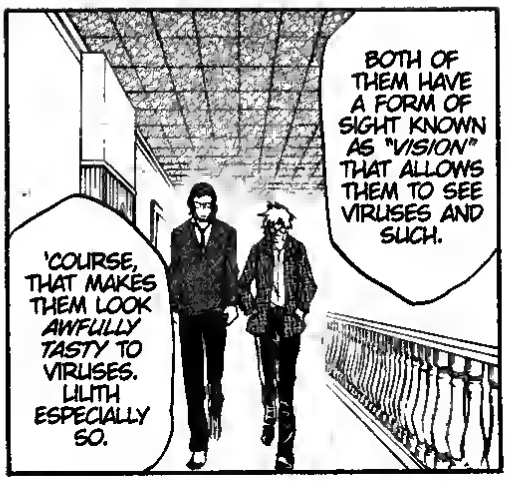
HERE. USE THIS.
?

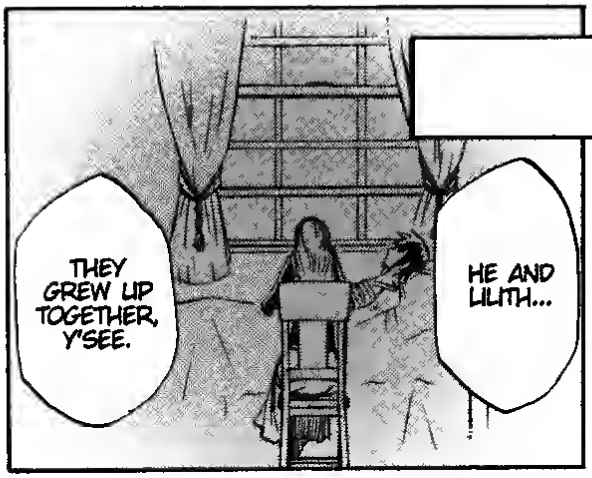
?!
AH, THAT'S RIGHT ...
I FORGOT YOU DON'T HAVE VISION, NACHASH.

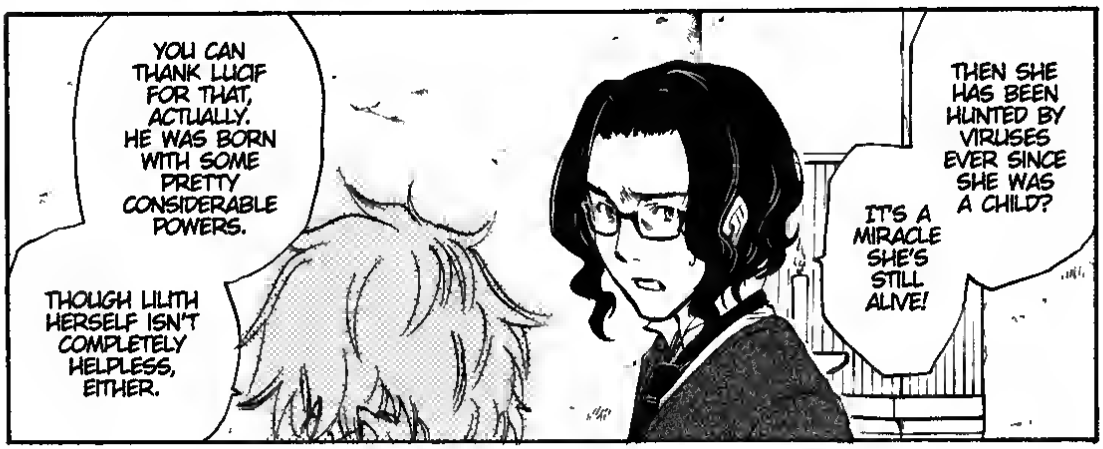
CHK
!

GOOD GOD!
WHAT ON EARTH IS THIS?!
AH!


.....!

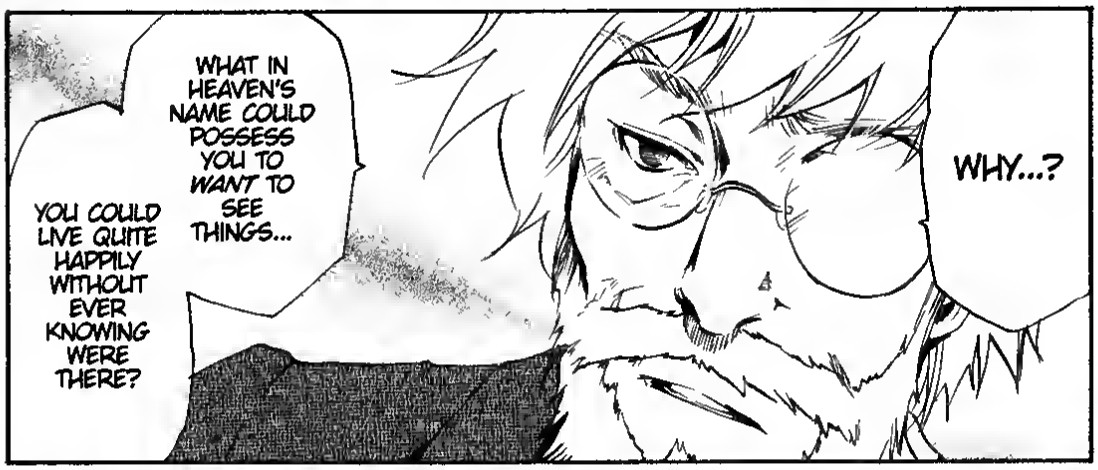

BOTH OF THEM HAVE A FORM OF SIGHT KNOWN AS "VISION" THAT ALLOWS THEM TO SEE VIRUSES AND SUCH.
'COURSE, THAT MAKES THEM LOOK AWFULLY TASTY TO VIRUSES. LILITH ESPECIALLY SO.

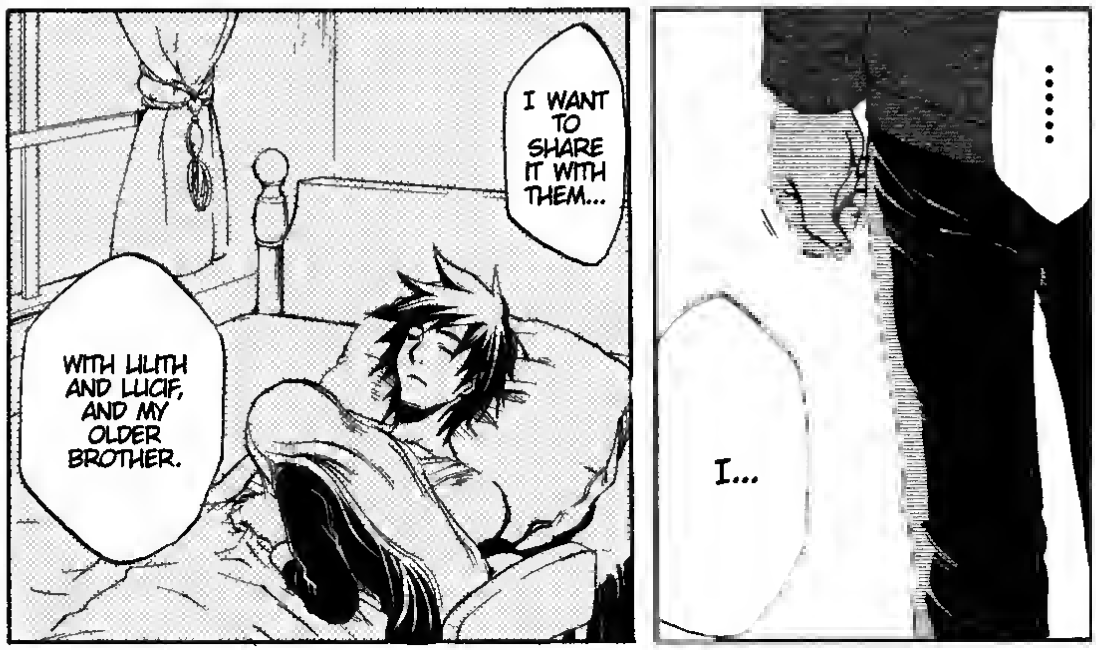

HE AND LILITH...
THEY GREW UP TOGETHER, Y'SEE.

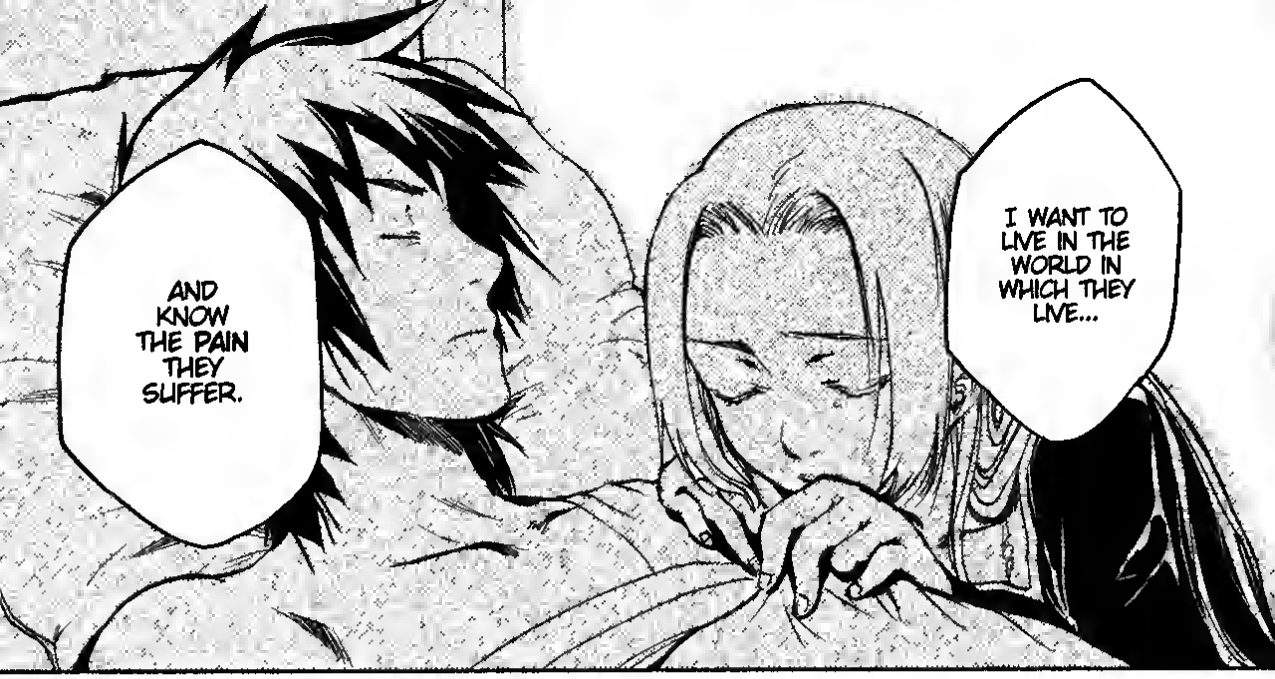

THEN SHE HAS BEEN HUNTED BY VIRUSES EVER SINCE SHE WAS A CHILD?
IT'S A MIRACLE SHE'S STILL ALIVE!
YOU CAN THANK LUCIF FOR THAT, ACTUALLY. HE WAS BORN WITH SOME PRETTY CONSIDERABLE POWERS.
THOUGH LILITH HERSELF ISN'T COMPLETELY HELPLESS, EITHER.

I FEAR SHE MUST HAVE SEEMED QUITE INSANE.
TO NORMAL HUMANS COMPLETELY UNAWARE OF VIRUSES, HOWEVER...
IT SEEMS THAT SHOULD A VIRUS MANAGE TO INJURE HER...
SHE SUDDENLY TURNS VIOLENTLY AGGRESSIVE AGAINST THEM. IT'S ALMOST AS IF SHE HAS GONE BERSERK.
BECAUSE SHE'S BEEN HUNTED FOR SO LONG, HER BODY HAS DEVELOPED A PECULIAR DEFENSE SYSTEM.
LUCIF, IN ORDER TO PROTECT HER, TAGGED ALONG...
CLAIMING HE WAS HERE TO "TRAIN."
SHE CAME HERE ALMOST AS IF SHE WERE SOME FUGITIVE ON THE LAM.
THIS WAS THE ONLY PLACE WE COULD GO.
.....!

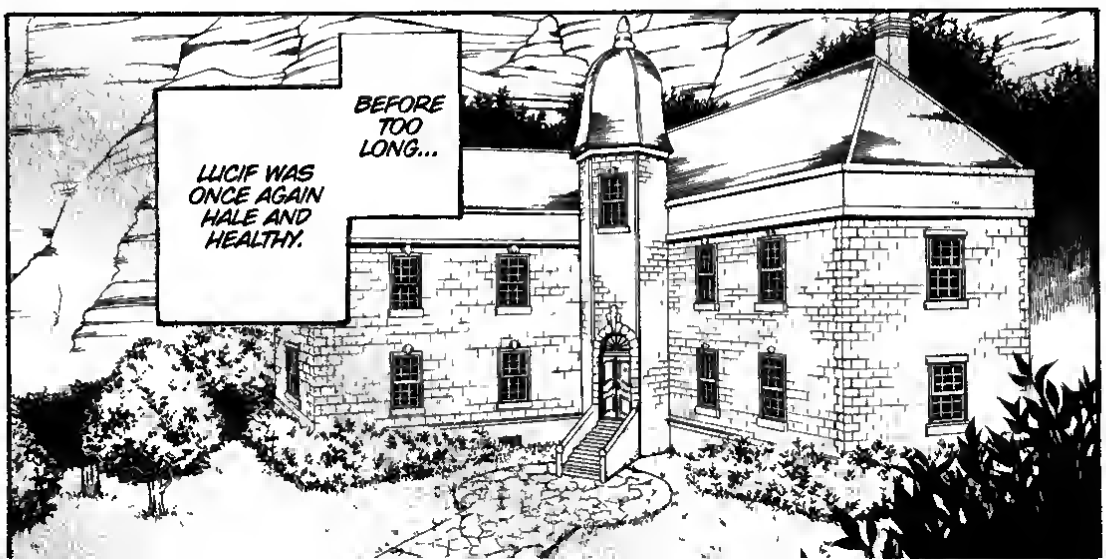
SENSEI...
HN?
PLEASE.
TEACH ME HOW TO MAKE THAT MONOCLE YOU LENT ME EARLIER.


WHY...?
WHAT IN HEAVEN'S NAME COULD POSSESS YOU TO *WANT* TO SEE THINGS...
YOU COULD LIVE QUITE HAPPILY WITHOUT EVER KNOWING WERE THERE?


I...
I WANT TO SHARE IT WITH THEM...
WITH LILITH AND LUCIF, AND MY OLDER BROTHER.

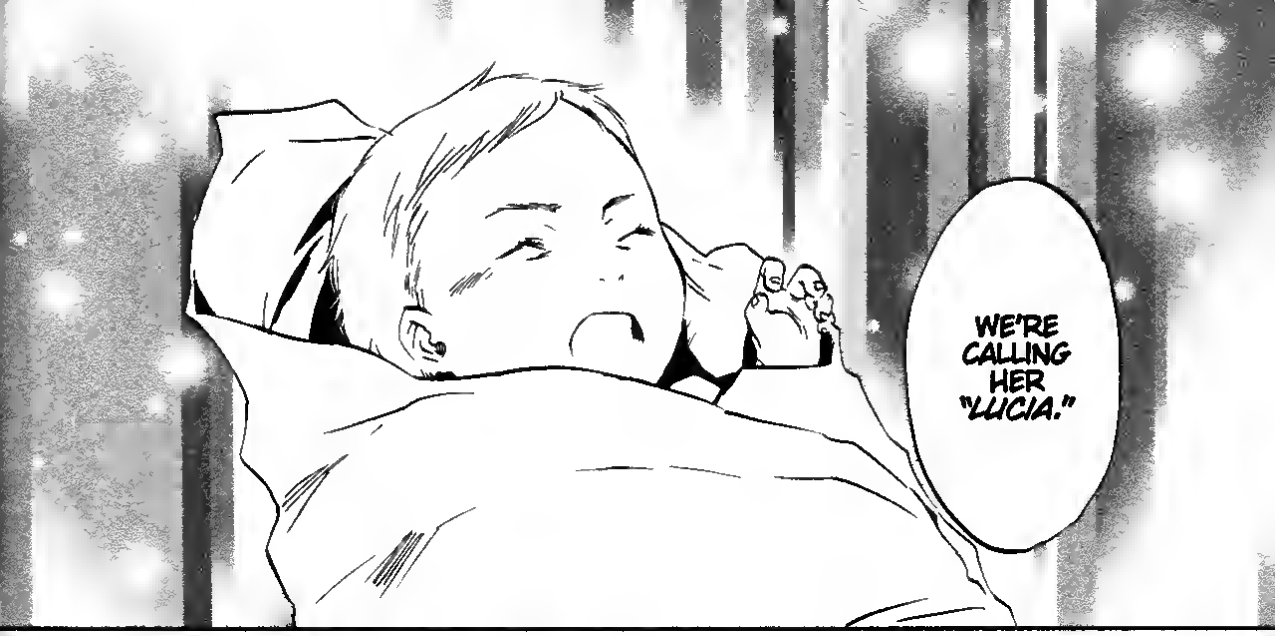

I WANT TO LIVE IN THE WORLD IN WHICH THEY LIVE...
AND KNOW THE PAIN THEY SUFFER.

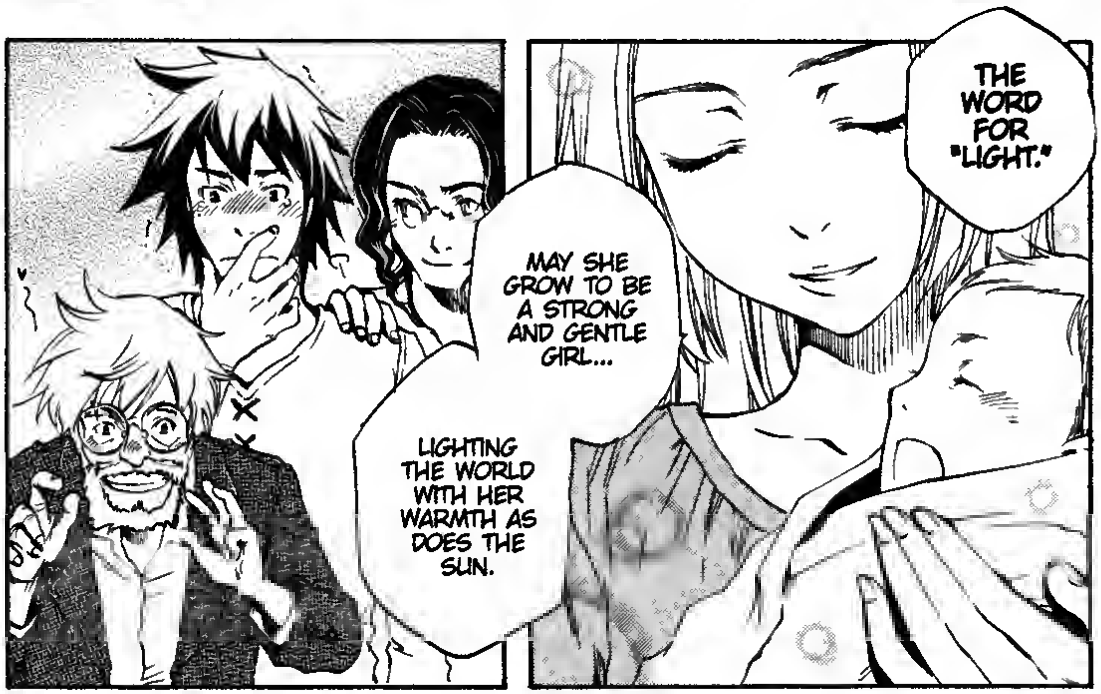
FWIF

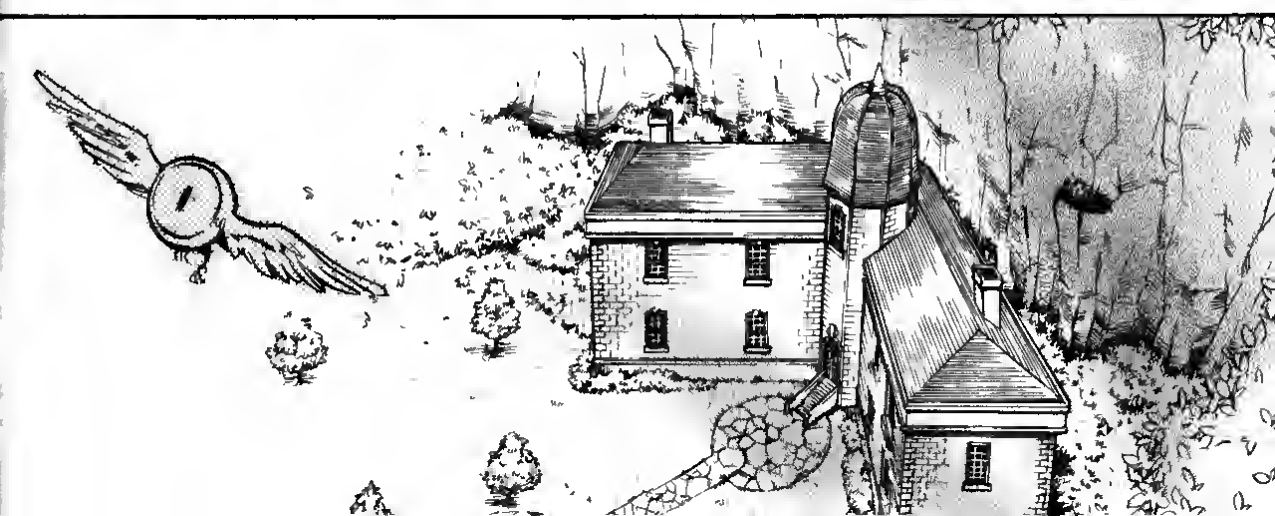

BEFORE TOO LONG...
LUCIF WAS ONCE AGAIN HALE AND HEALTHY.

AND THE DAYS - PEACEFUL, QUIET, ORDINARY DAYS -
FLOWED GENTLY BY.

THE TIMES, THOUGH SLOW, NEVER GREW STALE.
EVERY DAY WE SPENT TOGETHER, WE SPENT WITH A SMILE.
WAAAH...


WE'RE CALLING HER "LUCIA."


THE WORD FOR "LIGHT."
MAY SHE GROW TO BE A STRONG AND GENTLE GIRL...
LIGHTING THE WORLD WITH HER WARMTH AS DOES THE SUN.



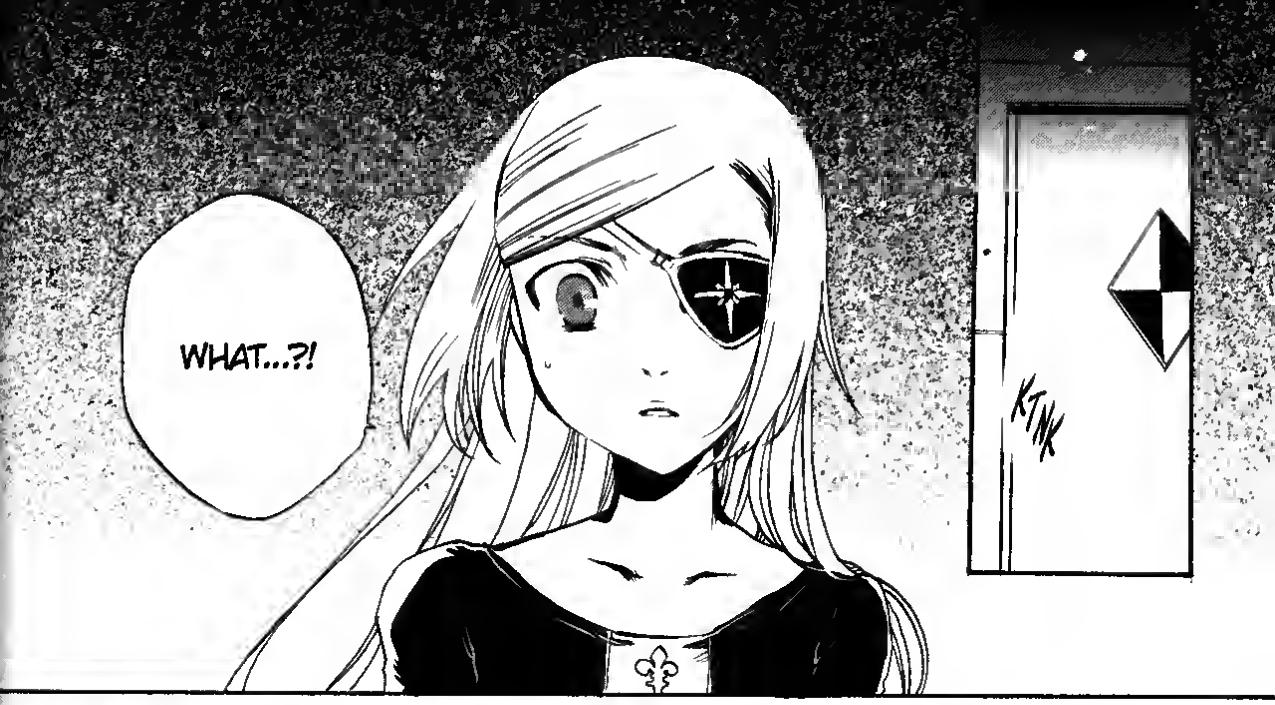
FWIFWIF

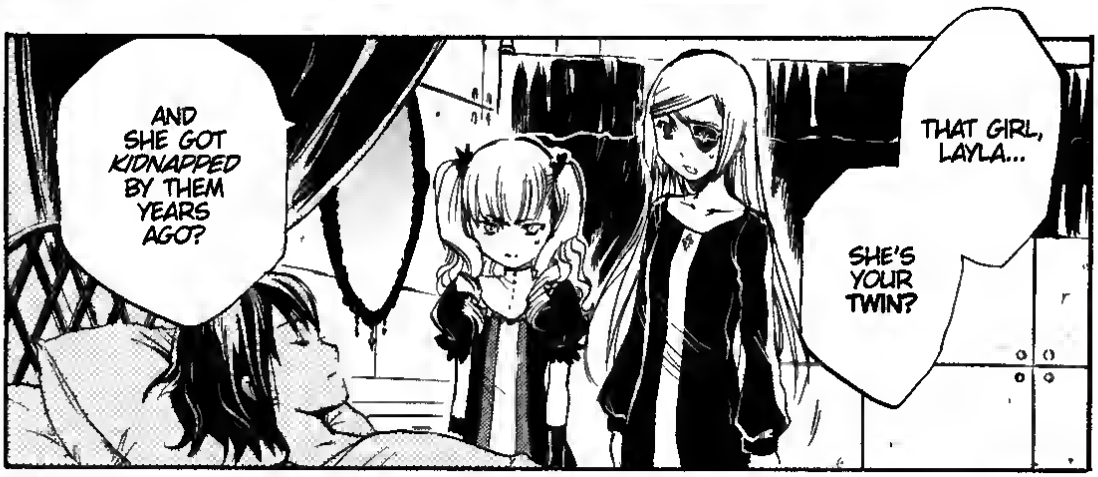
LILITH.
MUST I NOW BECOME LIKE THE CREATURE YOU NAMED ME...?
PLIP
PLIP
"NACHASH"...
THE SERPENT THAT GAVE THE FRUIT OF KNOWLEDGE TO EVE.
MUST I DO AS IT DID...
AND TEACH YOUR CHILD THE FORBIDDEN...?

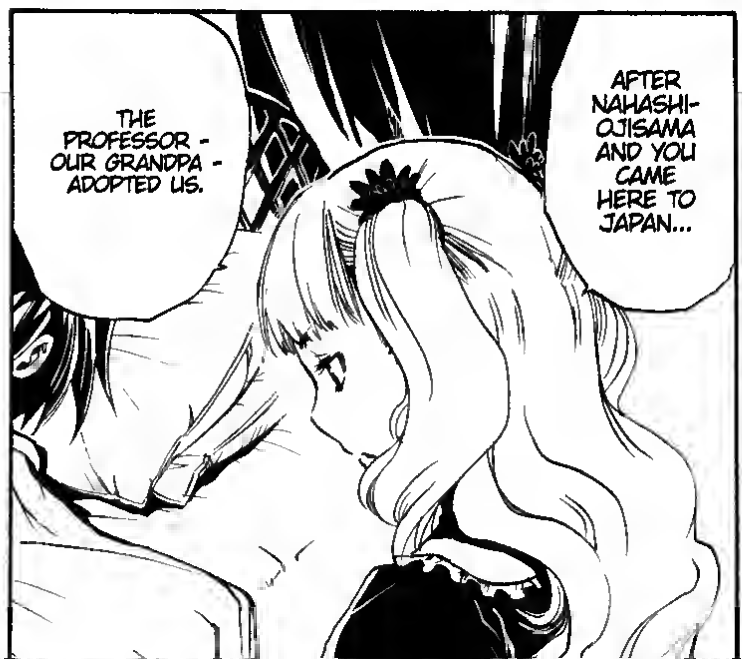
SHE WILL NEVER AGAIN BE ABLE TO RETURN TO PARADISE ONCE SHE HAS TASTED OF THIS APPLE...
THE APPLE...
OF TRUTH.
NACHASH...

PLEASE...
GUIDE HER TO THE TRUE LIGHT...
KNOCK KNOCK
KNEEL
SENSEI.
I AM READY.

I HAVE FINALLY MADE UP MY MIND.
PLEASE TEACH ME...
EVERYTHING.


WHAT...?!
KTNK

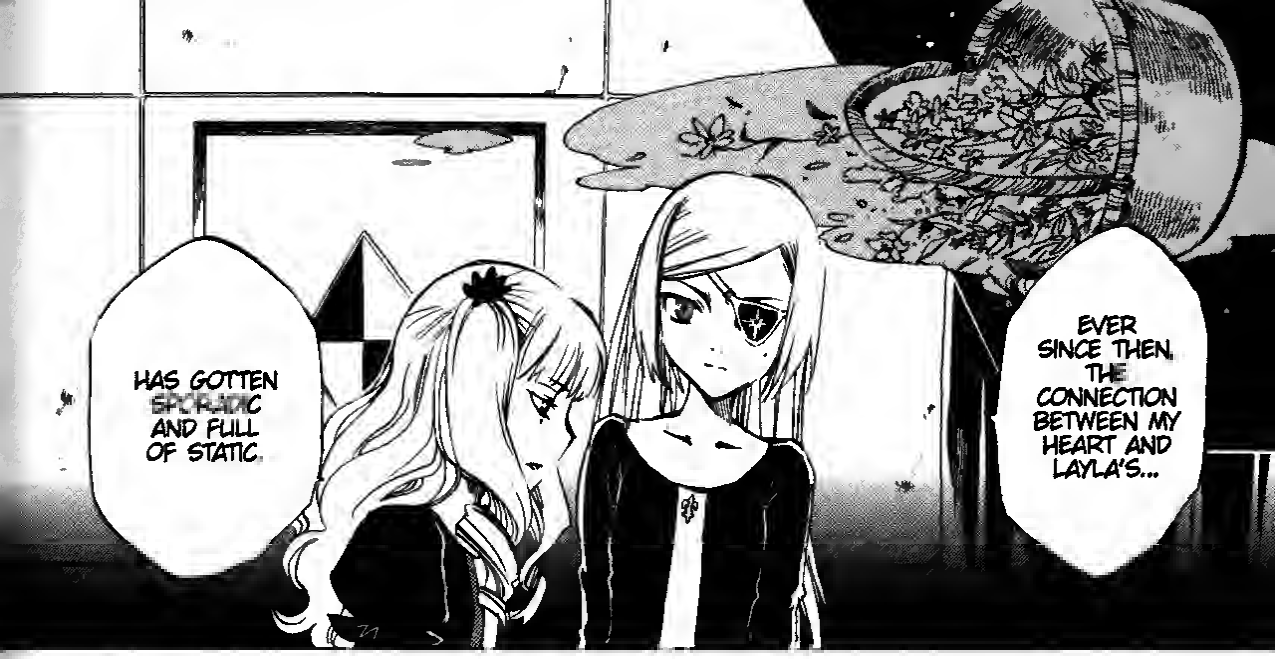

AND SHE GOT KIDNAPPED BY THEM YEARS AGO?
THAT GIRL, LAYLA...
SHE'S YOUR TWIN?

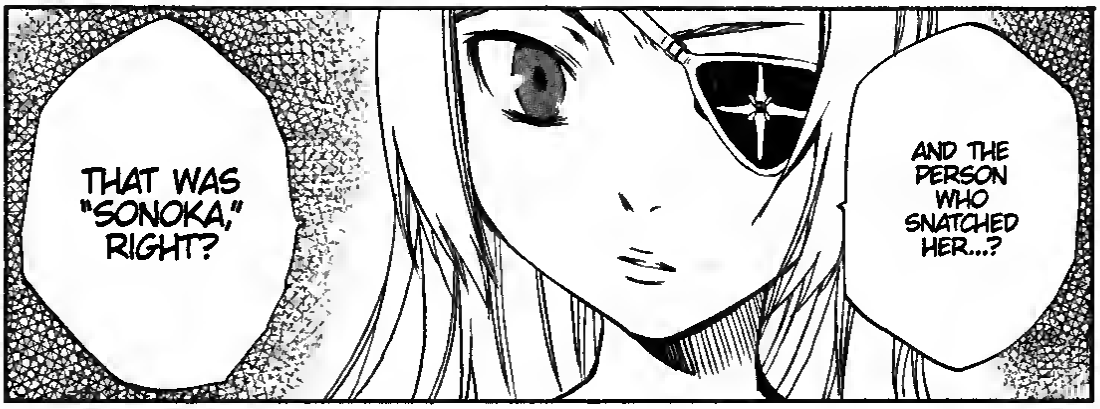

THE PROFESSOR - OUR GRANDPA - ADOPTED US.
AFTER NAHASHI-OJISAMA AND YOU CAME HERE TO JAPAN...

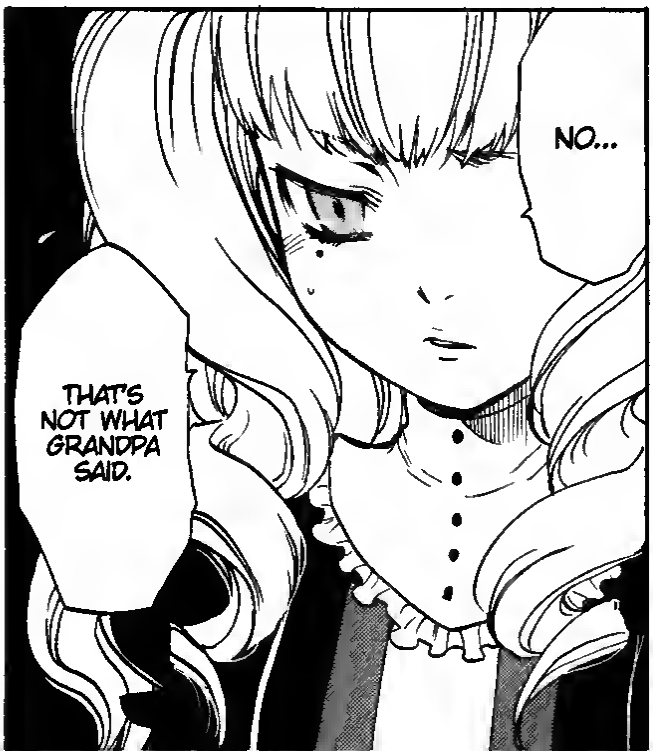
YES... WE WERE ABANDONED AS BABIES.

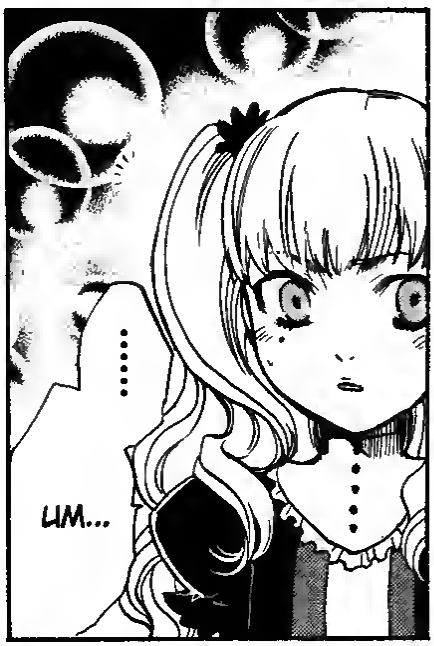
LAYLA AND I ALWAYS HAD THIS STRANGE POWER.
"TELEPATHY," PEOPLE CALLED IT.
WHEN WE WERE TAKEN FROM THE ORPHANAGE TO HIS MANSION.
WE WERE FIVE AT THE TIME, I THINK...
LIKE YOU'D EXPECT, PEOPLE ALWAYS LOOKED AT US FUNNY AND WHISPERED BEHIND OUR BACKS.
WE'D ONLY EVER REALLY TRUSTED EACH OTHER.
AS HE GOT OLDER AND HIS BODY GOT WEAKER, WE WANTED TO HELP HIM OUT HOWEVER WE COULD.
SO WE STUDIED HARD AND BECAME ASSISTANTS IN HIS WORK.
BUT GRANDPA WAS SO KIND...

ONE DAY...
BUT THEN...


HAS GOTTEN SPORADIC AND FULL OF STATIC.
EVER SINCE THEN, THE CONNECTION BETWEEN MY HEART AND LAYLA'S...


THAT WAS "SONOKA," RIGHT?
AND THE PERSON WHO SNATCHED HER...?


NO...
THAT'S NOT WHAT GRANDPA SAID.


.....
UM...

GRANDPA CALLED HIM...
SHE
LUCIF.
!!
TO BE CONTINUED!!

JAPANESE HONORIFICS GUIDE

To ensure that all character relationships appear as they were originally intended, all character names have been kept in their original Japanese name order with family name first and given name second. For copyright reasons, creator names appear in standard English name order.

In addition to preserving the original Japanese name order, Seven Seas is committed to ensuring that honorifics—polite speech that indicates a person's status or relationship towards another individual—are retained within this book. Politeness is an integral facet of Japanese culture and we believe that maintaining honorifics in our translations helps bring out the same character nuances as seen in the original work.

The following are some of the more common honorifics you may come across while reading this and other books:

-san – The most common of all honorifics, it is an all-purpose suffix that can be used in any situation where politeness is expected. Generally seen as the equivalent to Mr., Miss, Ms., Mrs., etc.

-sama – This suffix is one level higher than "-san" and is used to confer great respect upon an individual.

-dono – Stemming from the word "tono," meaning "lord," "-dono" signifies an even higher level than "-sama," and confers the utmost respect.

-kun – This suffix is commonly used at the end of boys' names to express either familiarity or endearment. It can also be used when addressing someone younger than oneself or of a lower status.

-chan – Another common honorific. This suffix is mainly used to express endearment towards girls, but can also be used when referring to little boys or even pets. Couples are also known to use the term amongst each other to convey a sense of cuteness and intimacy.

Sempai – This title is used towards one's senior or "superior" in a particular group or organization. "Sempai" is most often used in a school setting, where underclassmen refer to upperclassmen as "sempai," though it is also commonly said by employees when addressing fellow employees who hold seniority in the workplace.

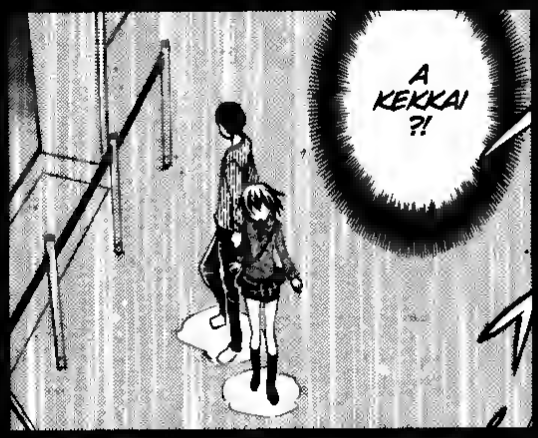
Kouhai – This is the exact opposite of "sempai," and is used to refer to underclassmen in school, junior employees at the workplace, etc.

Sensei – Literally meaning "one who has come before," this title is used for teachers, doctors, or masters of any profession or art.

Oniisan – This title literally means "big brother." First and foremost, it is used by younger siblings towards older male siblings. It can be used by itself or attached to a person's name as a suffix (niisan). It is often used by a younger person toward an older person unrelated by blood, but as a sign of respect. Other forms include the informal "oniichan" and the more respectful "oniisama."

Oneesan – This title is the opposite of "oniisan" and means "big sister." Other forms include the informal "oneechan" and the more respectful "oneesama."

TRANSLATION NOTES



53.4.15 *"kekkai"* is a magical barrier or ward.

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Venus Versus Virus

ヴィーナス ウァーサス ウァイアラス

VOLUME 5

story & art by Atsushi Suzumi

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